The Pulpit

A Journal of Contemporary Preaching

Gerald B. O'Grady, Jr.:

THE SUMMIT SERMON

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The Christian Hope for Last Things That Puts the Joy in Advent

COVENANT ANI

THE covenant story is a way of affirming the historic teaching which the church has called the doctrine of God's Providence, or sometimes Predestination. By this we declare that our destiny, like our origin, lies with the Lord. He is the Alpha and the Omega—the beginning and the end. Our future, like our past, is hid in the mystery of God's steadfast love and righteousness.

Our creation is understood by reading life's story backward—a feat of "retrospective imagination," the way you figure out the beginning of a movie into which you came a little late. Knowledge of the conclusion of the drama of our life, insight into our destiny, is reached here and now by a comparable act of "anticipation." In both instances the clue for finding out the purpose of God—in our creation *and* for our destiny—is what we have come to call the central event of all history, and the most crucial event in our lives. It is the coming into the world of the Man of God's own choosing, "the new covenant in the body and blood of Jesus Christ."

Time-Honored Mysteries

The Christian church practices two time-honored mysteries. Taken together they represent the relationship of Christ both to the origin and to the goal of our lives. They are called sacraments, the sacrament of baptism and the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Sacrament simply means "mystery," the mystery of the healing power of God's love and how it works once it gets inside the human heart, first in the heart of Jesus and then in the hearts of those of us who bear His name.

Baptism affirms the mystery of our election, the promise that from the beginning we are included in God's covenant-love.

The Lord's Supper reveals the mystery of our destiny, that God's love is steadfast and that his covenant is everlasting. The Lord's Supper is the clue to the mystery of the end of our human drama, because it writes in letters, as it were, s feet high, a banner headline for the final editi of the *World Times*:

GOD'S LOVE IS VICTOR OVER MAN'S FEAR

The love of the broken body and shed blood di arms my pretensions and reveals the wantonne of my infidelity. It throttles my rebellious wi strangling my pride and greed, my envy and co tempt. Above all, Christ's love reassures me at m most vulnerable spot. He reassures me that m fear of extinction, my fear of death, is unfounde If he can die, in order that I may be redeeme from a living death, death itself loses its demon fascination.

There are four words in our Christian heritag which we have used to express the meaning of th sacrament of the Lord's Supper: (1) Eucharis or thanksgiving for the grace of our Lord Jesu Christ; (2) Holy Communion, or fellowship wit God through Christ; (3) *Agape* (the love feast) or the fellowship of those who are one in Christ (4) The Victory Banquet of the Kingdom of Goo or the food of eternal life.

First and foremost, we must understand ou celebration of the Lord's Supper as an act o gratitude. It is occasioned by our rememberin ("This do in remembrance of me") Christ's sacri fice ("My body, broken for you") in redeeming u from the powers of evil. How can we possibl celebrate so great a sacrifice as his has been for u without making our celebrating a sacrifice o praise and thanksgiving?

Praise and Thanksgiving

Our Lord's own words of institution imply tha we give thanks, as oft as we break bread. Indeed I think that the Iona Community, in the Church o Scotland, has maintained in its liturgy an essentia element in the practice of the Eucharist. The bread for the Lord's Supper (the sacrament is celebrated every Sunday) is baked by the house wives of the community. In fact, the whole week's supply of bread is brought to the communion table with the morning offering. There it is blessed, some is broken and shared sacramentally, and the rest is taken home to hallow the whol week's work. The Eucharist is therefore the Christian community's sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving.

In the second place, and quite centrally in our lives, the Lord's Supper is the Holy Communion

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By Allen O. Miller

COMMUNION

is our innermost experience of fellowship with d. One of the controversial issues in understand- the meaning of the Lord's Supper has grown t of differing interpretations of the "real pres- ce."

Varied Interpretations

Whatever your interpretation of the manner of e real presence of Christ and of his love in our idst, you cannot mistake his presence when you e him break the bread. As John Calvin clearly w, the mystery is not how bread becomes his dy. The mystery is that his body and blood, i.e., s death and resurrection, become the bread and ine by which our spirits are fed.

> On Him must our spirits feed,
> O taste and see that the Lord is good.

You remember the story of the two disciples on e way to Emmaus. It was just three days after e Lord's crucifixion. These disciples were sadly turning home from Jerusalem when a stranger rew near and walked along with them. Their con- ersation was enlightening, but not until they had nvited him to share the evening meal with them id he, in the breaking and blessing of the bread, eveal his identity to them. "Their eyes were pened and they recognized him." You cannot istake his presence when you see him break the read.

And you cannot escape his presence when you ear his words: "Come unto me!" One experience hat Mrs. Miller and I shall never forget is our ttendance at the service of Holy Communion at e Domkirken in Copenhagen, Denmark, at the ime of the Lund Conference on Faith and Order n August 1952. You may know that in this stately ld Danish cathedral the sculptor Thorvaldsen as placed huge likenesses of Christ and his dis- iples. The twelve disciples are arranged at inter- als along the side walls, six on either side of the ave, and the Christ stands over the altar, with ands outstretched in compassion, saying the words which the church has rightly always asso- iated with the celebration of the Lord's Supper: 'Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy aden, and I will give you rest." And when you neel to receive the broken bread and a sip from he cup, Christ looks you right in the eye. You annot escape his presence!

In the early church there was an observance which, for the most part, has been lost from the celebration of the Lord's Supper, but which we do well to restore. Even in the early days it seems to have been a separate practice. It was called the *Agape,* the "Love" feast. (My only acquaintance with this form of observance came in my youth in a little Methodist Church in eastern Pennsylvania.) The central feature of the simple ritual is the act of each worshiper sharing his bread with his neighbor.

Community Through Communion

Just as we acknowledge that the presence of Christ in our midst is guiding us to communion with God, so his presence unites us in community with each other. We become a community because we are a people who have been bound together in communion with the living God. The love that redeems and recreates us thereby seeks to inspire us to love, to bring healing into our "broken" communities. Therefore, must we not add, that the depth of our communion in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper is measured in the eyes of God by the breadth of our community during the remainder of the week. The demand *(aufgabe)* that goes with the promise *(gabe)* is clear.

This is the meaning of our Lord's parable concerning the day of final judgment and redemption:

> "Then the King will say to those at his right hand, 'Come, O blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.' Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see thee hungry and feed thee, or thirsty and give thee drink? And when did we see thee a stranger and welcome thee, or naked and clothe thee? And when did we see thee sick or in prison and visit thee?' And the King will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me.' "
> Matthew 25:34-40.

Thus through the *Agape* the Lord's Supper comes finally to be an eschatological feast. It is a Victory Banquet, celebrating, in anticipation, the final consummation of God's purpose. The victory which God has already won, in the Man whom he has chosen to represent his healing love in human life, is our assurance that God's love will ultimately reign supreme.

When Jesus says to his disciples, at the time of his last supper, "I tell you I shall not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom" (Matthew 26:29), our Lord is making the promise which leads the Apostle Paul to supplement his record of the words of Institution with the injunction: "For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes" (I Corinthians 11:26).

Let us pray: As this broken bread was scattered over the mountains, and being gathered together became one, so may the church be gathered from the ends of the earth into Thy everlasting Kingdom. Amen. *(Adapted from the Didache.)*

The Summit Sermon

By Gerald B. O'Grady, Jr.

As we gather as a congregation of Christians on the eve of the discussions which will take place here this week, it may be helpful first to "fence out" certain areas of concern which are more confusing than enlightening and then to bring up into sharp focus what is certainly our primary Christian concern today, and in the days immediately ahead.

We shall immediately exclude the perilous pretense to having quick and easy solutions for what are in fact highly involved situations. It is we Christians *in particular* who know that there are no sharp pat "answers" to the problems of history.

Basic Selfishness

From the Christian perspective, with its sometimes harsh realism, we know that the deepest problems of history stem from the fact that history is fallen—that men, and nations of men, are oriented over against God, that man is self-centered rather than God-centered. We know that this basic selfishness pits man against God, and man against man, and nations against nations.

The inevitable tensions which are the result of this self-concern mean that we are *always* to some extent in crisis, and then we must add, perhaps with a wry smile, that *some* crises are more critical than others.

GERALD B. O'GRADY, JR., preached this sermon on the eve of the July conference of heads of governments in Geneva, Switzerland—only a month after he became rector of the American Church which has been a spiritual center for Geneva's American community since its founding in 1873. After his ordination on graduation from the Episcopal Theological School at Cambridge, Massachusetts, in 1943, he was named Episcopal chaplain at Cornell University and assistant rector of St. John's Church, Ithaca, New York. Three years later he became chaplain and assistant professor of religion at Trinity College, Hartford, Connecticut. During his nine years there he extended Trinity's religious program to students of all faiths, supplementing the existing Episcopal and Roman Catholic clubs with a Student Christian Association and a Hillel Club for Jewish students.

Participating with Rector O'Grady in the service on the eve of the summit conference were Dr. W. A. Visser 't Hooft, general secretary of the World Council of Churches (shown between Secretary of State Dulles and President Eisenhower in the cover photograph); Prof. Jacques Courvoisier, dean of the faculty of theology of the University of Geneva, representing the National Protestant Church of Geneva; and the Rev. Everett Smith, rector emeritus of the American Church.

There is an "answer" to this basic problem history; but, in the first instance at least, it God's answer, not man's. He sent his Son in fallen history, to raise it up. Man, in his snarli self-absorption, *rejected* God's Son and crucifi him. Christ rose up victorious over the worst th we could do to him, and he sent into history h sanctifying Spirit, to work into us, to transfor us, to help us rise up victorious over our selfis ness and to bring us back into a redeemed mended relationship with him.

This is the Christian "Good News"—this dow movement of God into history in the Incarnatio Crucifixion, Resurrection, and in the quickenin action of the Holy Spirit which is available to eac of us if only we will open ourselves up to it.

God in History

This down-movement is *God's* answer to th basic problem of history. But *our* response to it i no quick and easy thing. Man, individually an collectively, must examine himself probingly searchingly, until his selfish pretensions are punc tured; withered pride must be replaced by th quiet flowering of humility; in repentance ma must acknowledge that he is not God, that he doe not do too well by himself and that he needs hel from Another. He must open himself up to th inworking of God's Grace and gradually be trans formed deep within himself; and as this happens his relationships, with God and with other me and nations, are transformed.

This does not come easily. The Good News that God loves us so much that while we were still in our sins he *died* for us—this is not welcome news to the fellow who can't admit that he is still self-centered, who blusteringly asserts that *he* can handle everything by himself, and who doggedly insists on his sovereignty without yielding to the real Sovereignty of God.

Danger Zones

With this understanding of history, beginning as it must with the doctrine of sin which simply describes man's selfish orientation, we can "fence out" of our thinking any naive expectations of simple answers to complex problems, and we can quickly go on to rule out two other danger zones of thought.

The first lies in the area of the Scylla and Charybdis of dogmatic absolutism on the one hand

l flabby surrender on the other. Let me present s in a very little situation, trusting you to make atever larger interpretations may be appro- ate.

The Christian pastor in working with his peo- lives always with an immediate and vivid areness of the total and absolute demand of d. Frequently he sees quite clearly where he ist go and what steps must be taken to get there. t if he has more than fuzz on his cheeks he is o aware of other opinions, perhaps of equal and posing dogmatisms on the part of his people. rtainly there will be currents of opinion and tion which must be taken into account. If he is a ristian realist, he is not surprised to find that e *progress of history,* whether within the micro- sm of his parish or in much larger scope, is not all like an arrow shooting straight to the mark.

The better analogy for both our personal and tional relations lies in sailing. The helmsman d his crew know exactly what mark they are iling for. There is nothing vague or wishy-washy out their goal or their determination to get ere. But the conduct of the ship requires an vareness of winds and tides and currents. In the ce of these, the helmsman does not let go; he is t swept away by them, nor does he drift with em. Neither does he doggedly point the bow of e boat at the mark without regard to wind and de, especially if the bow would be pointed up into contrary wind which would mean a dead stop. ather he keeps his ultimate goal constantly in ght, *firmly determined* to reach it, and then he nsitively correlates the data of water and eather and *uses* them, tacking to use the wind, ut keeping as close as he can to a straight line to ie mark.

God Works Through Man

The third area of thought from which we Chris- ans must recoil is the vain hope of magic—the ish that God might suddenly intervene in an tterly astonishing way. God *does* solve the prob- ms of the world, but he works *through man.* We hristians find our deepest understanding of how od works by examining his unique self-disclosure o us in the person and work of Christ. We note mmediately that Christ did not override the nat- ral faculties of men and turn them into puppets; ut rather, by his impact upon them, and in the nworking of his Spirit, he led them into deeper nderstanding and raised them up to higher levels f performance with the talents they already had.

We must expect, therefore, that the restoration f Order in history, with a parallel dissolving of ension, and increase of peace, will *not* be accom- lished by some sudden and astonishing action of od which in effect makes puppets of men. On the ontrary, these goals will be accomplished by men —men who know who they are, and who God is; nen who are rightly oriented under God and are *open* to the inworking of God's gracious guidance.

God uses men to accomplish his purposes in history, and in these next days he will use particular men. This leads to our positive conclusion which we must bring up into sharp focus.

Call to Prayer

The assignment for those of us who are not at the conference tables is quite clear: avoiding naive optimism as to the ease with which these things will be done; avoiding blind, dogged absolutism on the one hand and the temptation to abject capitulation on the other; avoiding the temptation to surrender all responsibility and ask God to do for us what he wants us to do for ourselves—avoiding these things, our assignment quite clearly is *prayer.*

I invite you to see a vision—no dream-bubble that will collapse, but a true vision which is coming into being at this moment and will materialize increasingly in the days immediately ahead.

A call to prayer has gone out from our World Council of Churches here in Geneva, and from every major Christian center, and the assurances of participation are pouring in. Today, tomorrow and on through the week, hold in your minds the vision of people of all races and colors and tongues and faiths, busy at prayer—clusters of people in thousands of simple mission chapels, individual shut-ins in beds and wheel chairs; congregations in the country, the suburbs and the cities, in simple country churches and massive cathedrals—literally millions upon millions of concerned people sending up to God great waves of prayer from all over the world.

It is *our* assignment to take a vital part in this vision: with private prayer in our homes; with corporate prayer here, in the great Service of Intercession at the Cathedral tomorrow morning, and in the Parc des Eaux Vives late this afternoon.

Our Assigned Role

And our prayer? Let it be an expression of loving concern for those who confer, that, as persons, they may be comforted and strengthened and granted patience and inner peace in the midst of the inevitable tension and fatigue of carrying such responsibility. Let us pray that in the midst of the tremendously pressing immediacies of the Conference, each of them may be open to the inworking of God's Holy Spirit and receptive to his guidance in all discussion, and in the making of decisions, which we pray will be in the direction of the lessening of tension and an increase of security and peace.

God works through men—through all of us, as we become the community of prayer; and through those who confer for us, as they are flowed-into and guided by the Holy Spirit. God challenges every one of us, brethren—each to fulfill his assigned role.

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Christmas and Meaning

By Paul L. McKay

Live life, then, with a due sense of responsibility, not as men who do not know the meaning and purpose of life, but as those who do. Ephesians 5:15 (Phillips).

EDWIN ARLINGTON ROBINSON spoke for an entire generation when with great wistfulness he inquired,

> What does it mean, this barren age of ours?
> Here are the men, the women and the flowers,
> The seasons and the sunset as before,
> What does it mean?[1]

This poignant question which persists throughout life has a strange insistence at Christmas—"What does it mean?" Behind the Christmas symbols, underneath its lovely legends, beyond its grand music and lilting poetry—what does it mean? One of the characteristics of our age is man's search for meaning. This question now relates itself to Christmas. It is a question we must not evade.

St. Paul exhorted the Christians at Ephesus to "live life, then, with a due sense of responsibility, not as men who do not know the meaning and purpose of life, but as those who do." The Christmas mood accentuates a deep yearning in the human heart to know more of "the meaning and purpose of life." The church holds deep convictions regarding the relevance of the Christmas message. It is a faith that relates itself to man's quest for meaning and purpose in life.

Supreme Encounter

At Christmastide we are reminded once more in many dramatic ways that through Jesus Christ, born as a babe in Bethlehem of Judea, God made his supreme and unique encounter with the world. "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us." Wearing the emblems of eternal meaning, Jesus Christ entered the arena of human conflict, not under human sponsorship, but in the name of God. Throughout the days of his flesh every note of Jesus' life sounded the bugle call of God's high and eternal purpose. Jesus' summons was extended to sinful man in the spirit of forgiving and redeeming love.

How can we "live life, then, . . . as men who . . . know the meaning and purpose of life?"

The significance of Jesus Christ's coming as the Word made flesh is seen first of all in the fact that he, as no other has done, clearly revealed the true structure of life. Jesus outlined life's dimensions in the light of eternal purpose. He took mar human desires and transmuted them into spiritu aspirations. Jesus did not change human natur He revealed what human nature could becor when infused with divine spirit. He merged th boundaries of man's life with the horizons of ete nal destiny. More than mere sentimentality ha caused generation after generation of believers sing, "Joy to the world! the Lord is come."

The Great Existentialist

Christmas bears witness to faith in life's etern meaning. Every thought of Jesus breathed th vitality of life. There is a very deep sense in whic Jesus was the existentialist *par excellence.* His li was truly engaged within the drama of a hi torical setting. His life was not based on a theor about God. It was the demonstration of a Goc controlled, God-surrendered life. His life outline the structure of life as life was meant to be.

Jesus believed that there was meaning to b found in human life and that God was the groun of eternal meaning. That is why he related every thing so completely to God. Jesus saw life withi the framework of a divine reference. He saw me not in relationship to one another but in terms o a divine concern. Never for a moment did Jesu suggest that man was an afterthought in the ex perience of God. Neither did Jesus believe tha man was an accident in cosmic history. Nor di he view man as the unwanted, unplanned child o passion. Jesus related man to God in terms o fatherhood at its noblest and best. Man is the off spring of divine love. With St. Paul we ca "Think of what that means." Jesus witnessed t the truth that man's origin was God, his natur was divine, his destiny was eternal. He did no teach that the "proper study of mankind is man." He saw man always in relationship to God hi creator.

This meaning is the structure upon which lif

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[1]Edwin Arlington Robinson, *Collected Poems* (New York: Macmillan, 1937). Used by permission.

PAUL L. McKAY, pastor of First Presbyterian Churc of Akron, Ohio, since 1946, has been named Akron's "Ma of the Year" for outstanding community service, and currently serving as moderator of the Presbytery of Cleve land. He received his B.D. degree from Union Theologica Seminary, New York, and his M.A. and Ph.D. degree from New York University, and speaks frequently to co lege and university groups.

built. Remove the structure and man's existence challenged by the disintegration of futility. gin by denying that life has meaning and you l by denying life itself. Life returns a rejection to the person who writes his autobiography hout faith in his ultimate purpose. Carl Jung pressed this insight when he said, "Psychoneuis must be understood as the suffering of an lividual who has not discovered what life means him." When life's meaning is lost, man is lost.

Hope and Despair

Modern man's conviction regarding life's ultite meaning has become so warped that too en his idealism and high purposes have seeped rough the cracks of his despair. Now a vast ptiness remains where faith, hope and love re meant to be. Christmas 1955 sees contemrary man swinging as a pendulum between ods of hope and desperation. In *The Firstborn,* ristopher Fry makes Moses the spokesman for ny people when the leader says,

> We're not ready to hope
> Or to despair; not ready to doubt or to believe.[2]

e Christ of Christmas challenges our evasions th the person of one who makes us ready to pe in spite of our doubts and our despair.

Paul once said, "Living to me means simply hrist." Paul had seen life's structure in the light the risen Christ. Henceforth there was meang and purpose to life. He felt that in a very real nse he, Paul, was no longer living, but that it as Christ who was living in him. Through Jesus hrist, Paul saw God reconciling an alienated orld unto himself. The great apostle looked upon hrist as a divine bridge laid over the abyss of man despair. Jesus Christ, God's bridge-builder d bridge, structured his life to span the breach tween God and man.

The true dimensions of Jesus' life are not fully vealed in any vital statistics report on his birth -should these suddenly come to light. Even bend his thirty years in Galilee and Judea the true mensions of his life are revealed not from a anger but from a cross. The cross lay on the art of God and stretched over the sins of man. he cross is altogether trustworthy; it will bear e weight of all who make the journey walking y faith in God's eternal love.

This is all a part of our Christmas faith and f its meaning.

> He came to make his blessings flow,
> Far as the curse is found.

he true cause of man's despair and the source of is deep anxiety is in the awareness of the gap an knows exists between himself and God. This iatus is not closed by an extension of human hought or ingenuity. God himself closed the reach through the person of Jesus Christ. In aking upon himself the form of man, Christ walked the edge of the great abyss and threw the cable of his life across the wastelands of despair. It is reported from the days when knighthood was in flower that at dusk brave knights would enter mountain caves and there encounter whatever beasts might be lurking in the shadows, thus making the cave safe for a night's dwelling for a lonely pilgrim who might chance that way. In a far greater fashion Jesus Christ entered life not as a knight in shining armor but as a babe in Bethlehem who went through the vicissitudes of growth, taking upon himself the form of man; "in every respect . . . tempted as we are," he then entered into the fear-haunted caves of human existence and emerged victorious. To hearts in despair he said, "Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."

Life's One Essential

We sing, "Joy to the world! the Lord is come," not only because in his coming Jesus Christ disclosed the structure of life's meaning, but also because he filled that structure with a substance that transcends human meaning. Jesus Christ put human life within both the context and content of God's purpose.

Robert Browning once wrote,

> The world's no blank for me,
> No blot. It means intensely
> And it means good.

Our Christmas faith revises Browning's words to read,

> The world's no blank for me,
> No blot. It means intensely
> And it means God.

The mysteries of God flow through the life and person of Jesus Christ. As finite beings we do not pretend that we can completely comprehend him. Neither can we for long escape him. Let us not think for a moment that Jesus Christ is a past event in human history. The Christ of Christmas is more than a memory. He confronts us daily as a living presence challenging us in our evasions and pursuing us with judgment and love. In moments such as these we know that Jesus is not incidental to the human scene. He is indispensable. He is not an appendage to life. He is life's apex. We have sought to make him expendable. When will we learn that he is life's one essential? No, Jesus Christ is not a luxury. He is Lord of life.

Divine Potential

Jesus' own relationship with God suggests the true substance of life's meaning. Within his person Jesus disclosed the divine potential of a God-related life. Beyond that he promised the fulfillment of the human potential to all who sought God's will. "Follow me," he said, "I will give you the power to become . . ."

After William Dean Howells met Tolstoy he said, "Life will never be the same again." Tolstoy's personality made an indelible impact upon

[2]Christopher Fry, *The Firstborn* (New York: Oxford). Used by permission.

him. Jesus Christ has made an even greater impression upon the life and thought of our world. He chose to encounter life on our terms. He looked with unveiled eyes into the face of human despair. And now for all who look into his face and see there the face of God, life can never be the same again. "The old has passed away, behold, the new has come." The fulfillment of Jesus' life nullifies futility in every life. Walter Russell Bowie expressed it well when he said, "Through Jesus, this God and man, living, dying, and forever alive, we are redeemed: redeemed from bewilderment, from lostness, from the burden of sins that would be intolerable if they were not forgiven."[3]

Light in Darkness

A man has difficulty arguing convincingly regarding life's futility in the presence of Jesus. In the depth of Jesus' life, so firmly rooted in God, how shallow and false appears Anatole France's conclusion with respect to life's purpose: "Men are born; they suffer; they die;—there is no other meaning." Jesus' presence somehow cancels the cynic's sneer. Jesus touched life and filled it with infinite meaning. His life remains a light shining in the darkness of this world, and "the darkness has not overcome it."

William Lyon Phelps was not a theologian; he was a professor of literature. Perhaps that is why he expressed his thought in such exquisite language: "Without Christ I should believe that there was some Force, some Ultimate Reality, but I should not worship it, pray to it, nor give it my vote. To me Jesus Christ is the Divine Manifestation. He is the only man I ever heard of who looks like God, who talks like God, and who acts like God. If he is not divine, then my hopes are all dust, and my faith dead. He is my Lord and my God. I worship him and follow him as best I may."

Sustaining Power

The Christmas message has yet another meaning. With the coming of Christ we are given the promise of a continuing and sustaining power. Not only did Jesus establish goals for living and set up directions, but he also established the source of power for the fulfillment of life. Without the promise of a sustaining power, faith would be at best a sporadic whim. God has put power for living within the continuum of divine grace. "My grace," he has promised, "is sufficient for you."

Matthew in particular stressed this aspect of our Christmas message. His Gospel account opens with a picture of a heavenly visitant appearing to Joseph in a dream. Following the angel's declaration that Mary "will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus." Matthew recalls the words of the prophet Isaiah, " 'And his name shall be called Emmanuel' (which means God with us.)" Matthew emphasizes the truth that the person of Jesus represented the presence of God. It is significant that Matthew closes his Gospel with Jesu promise: "Lo, I am with you always, to the clo . . ." The implication is clear: the span of li from beginning to end is marked with the pre ence of God with us. In him we find a sustaini power.

In most instances the doctrine of the incarn tion of Jesus Christ is not associated directly wi the concept of prayer. Is there a relationship he that we have previously missed? Perhaps there an alliance between the incarnation and pray that is deep and abiding; one that transcen mere symbolism. In the incarnation of Christ, G identified himself with man when "the Wo became flesh." Hence, Jesus Christ the God-ma encounters life. Through prayer, at its deepe levels, man incarnates God's Spirit in the divin human comradeship which is true prayer. In Jes Christ, God takes upon himself the form of ma In prayer, man opens his life to the full life God. Paul caught the meaning of this relationsh when he wrote: "Likewise the Spirit helps us our weakness; for we do not know how to pra as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes f us with sighs too deep for words." Here, Paul say quite clearly, in true prayer God's Spirit take possession of man and prays through him. The is a sense in which a divine incarnation is a pre ent truth. Who can understand life's meaning God's guidance apart from prayer?

Divine Intent

Through prayer the presence of the incarnat Christ becomes a continuing presence and a sus taining power. "Christ in you the hope of glory. So it is that we can say, as did Walter Rauschen busch,

> When I enter into God
> All life has meaning.
> Without asking I know;
> My desires are even now fulfilled,
> My fever is gone
> In the great quiet of God.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> So it is when I step through the gate of prayer
> From time into eternity.

Christmas, then, speaks to the emptiness o "hollow men" with a message profound in dept and as far-reaching as human need. It is littl wonder that Christmas thrills our hearts and stir our souls. In the Christmas event we find eternit breaking into time. The Christmas message dis closes in a new dimension God's structure fo human life. It reveals God's intent for the sub stance of human experience and fills the conten of a man's life with God-centered thought. Finally Christmas shouts with the voices of angelic host that man need never walk alone for Emmanu has come—God with us.

Because of Christmas we exhort ourselves i the words of Paul, "Live life, then, with a du sense of responsibility, not as men who do no know the meaning and purpose of life, but a those who do."

[3]Walter Russell Bowie, *Preaching* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1954). Used by permission.

e Terrible Obeisance of
sperate Violence

Herod's Christmas Party

By John R. Bodo

Matthew 2:13-23.

N this season of Christmas parties, we recall the festivities that honored the little boy after om Christmas was named. Two of these parties love to remember in drama and song. We join e shepherds' party, sharing their speechless oration. We take our places with the wise men, ering our gifts to the Christ. Year after year e memory of these scenes fills us with wonder d thanksgiving.

But there was another party given in honor of r Savior's birth. It is seldom remembered beuse it does not seem to fit into the mood of hristmas. It is too incongruous — too horrible too futile. We would rather not think about erod's Christmas party. We would rather prend that it is one of the many narratives in the ible which we might as well skip because it has o significance for us. There were not many small ildren in Bethlehem when Herod's soldiers deended on the town, but in their innocent death ey raised a cry which all our carols have not en able to drown. What should we do with them? ow can we fit Herod's Christmas party into the eaning and message of Christmas?

Matthew's Interpretation

The story of the massacre of the children is reorted only by Matthew and it is obvious that Iatthew himself was perplexed as to what to do ith it. Evidently he too would have preferred to kip it—to pretend that it did not happen. But nowing that it could not have happened against he wishes of God or even without some purpose n God's part, he tried to discover this purpose. His explanation is plodding and poetic, ingenious nd far-fetched, naive and inspired.

Matthew uses the story to glorify God for niraculously saving and protecting Jesus. Warned by God's angel, the holy family flees to Egypt where so many thousands of Jews had found refuge in the course of their country's troubled history. Then when the Savior returns from Egypt, Matthew is reminded of Moses, under whose leadership God had delivered his people hundreds of years earlier. Against this background of sacred history, the story becomes a symbol of both providence and deliverance.

The story has not always been as studiously ignored as it is today. During the middle ages when Christian piety was more earthy and less squeamish, the massacre of the holy innocents was a frequent theme. Instead of being shocked into silence, Christian writers and artists saw in these murdered infants the first martyrs of the faith. After all, did they not die—literally—in Jesus' place? Did they not, in a very deep sense, give their lives for their Lord? We have a contemporary echo of this piety in Holman Hunt's painting "The Triumph of the Innocents," in which the infants, awakened from their brief sleep, are dancing on the banks of the river of life, singing the praises of their Lord.

All these interpretations of the story are suggestive and spiritually enriching, but they do not do justice to the central figure who is as much a part of Christmas as the shepherds and the wise men. As a matter of fact, Herod is a more plausible, more universal figure than either the shepherds or the wise men. The shepherds are minority representatives. They represent that minority of the world's simple folk whose simplicity is not ignorance but innocence, and whose religion is not superstition but an intuitive communion with God. The wise men are also minority representatives. They represent that minority of the world's great men who can afford to be humble because they know enough to know how little they really know. Herod is different. He is the representative of the majority. He is our brother.

Portrait of Herod

At first blush, of course, we feel little kinship with a petty tyrant of two thousand years ago. It seems far-fetched and outrageous to be compared with a man who murdered his wife and three of his sons as well as all the rivals, real or imaginary, who ever came within the orbit of his savage suspicious nature. It seems ridiculous to be mentioned in the same breath with a cold-

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blooded murderer of children, when we yearly delight our own children and the children of our loved ones and friends with Christmas gifts and Christmas fun.

But Herod has been somewhat misrepresented. For one thing, we see him in the mirror of Christian tradition. We base our whole judgment of him on the Gospel record. We are not likely to know much about him from other, more impartial sources. An obscure historical monograph by A. H. M. Jones entitled *The Herods of Judaea** gives us a fuller and fairer picture of Herod. From this history of the Herodian dynasty, the Herod of the infamous Christmas party emerges every bit as cruel as we know him to be, but with his cruelty revealed as a part of cruel times and crude standards rather than as the result of any unique and special perversity.

No Stranger to Greatness

Herod lived at a time when his cruelty was not particularly conspicuous. The story of his dynasty reads like the story of the House of Borgia. It is a story of treachery, deceit and blood; but such were the instruments of power in those dark days, and I am sure they are not very different in our own enlightened day. At least it can be said that in those days murder always bore a personal stamp and involved personal risk. Anonymous, impersonal, remote-control killing did not appear on this earth until our bright, happy century.

Judged by the standards of his own time, then, Herod appears as a ruthless, able and relatively successful ruler. He foisted himself on the Jewish people who despised him because he was a foreigner. But he managed to keep a measure of peace in their war-racked country and even to enlarge the country's borders. He played politics with the Romans who despised him because he was an underling. But he managed to die a natural death which was more than most of Rome's puppets were able to do. He was given the title of "the Great" and, upon closer scrutiny, it appears he was no stranger to greatness.

Herod and Jesus

Of course, from the Gospel narratives it is hard to see much greatness in Herod. Richard Crashaw, the 17th century English poet, speaks of him with mingled horror and pity.

> Why art thou troubled, Herod? What vain fear
> Thy blood-revolving breast to rage doth move?
> Heaven's King, who doffs himself weak flesh to wear,
> Comes not to rule in wrath, but serve in love;
> Nor would he this thy feared crown from thee tear,
> But give thee a better with himself above.
> Poor jealousy! Why should he wish to prey
> Upon thy crown, who gives his own away?

It is hard to see anything in Herod's slaughter of the infants except the ghastly fear and rage of a frustrated old man. What danger, we ask, could have come to Herod from a newborn baby when he would surely be dead long before t baby had a chance to grow to manhood? W should Herod unleash such violence upon the S of God whose mission to the world, according prophecy, was to be a mission of peace?

It may be that Herod, instead of being imp tent and irrational, was far more inspired than v give him credit for being. It is a matter of reco that the demons recognized Jesus as the Messi before even his disciples were quite certain of h identity. The soul of Herod was the headquarte of many demons. Their counsel guided him wise and effectively in his political and military dec sions. Why should he not have had a demonic— and utterly correct—intuition concerning Jesus?

Unique Tribute

This can be said for Herod: he took Jesus ser ously. He knew that if Jesus was allowed to liv and to fulfill his mission, it would be a death blo to him and to the like of him. He sensed that th threat of this non-violent Messiah who was com ing into the world as a little child was the greate threat he had ever faced. For violence can alway be held in check or defeated by more violence but against moral and spiritual power violenc is powerless.

In this way, Herod fittingly supplements th homage paid to Jesus by the shepherds and th wise men. The shepherds saw in the Christ chil the sign of the mercy and love of God. The wis men found in him the token of God's unfathomabl wisdom. Herod failed to see these things, but h sensed just as surely another equally important reality: he sensed, in the Advent of the Christ, th justice and the inevitable judgment of God. The massacre of the infants was as truly an act o homage as the shepherds' adoration or the wise men's costly gifts. In fact, it was the most start- ling, most discerning homage Christ received during his earthly life until Caiaphas and Pilate awarded him the cross.

The Herod in Us

But what do we have in common with Herod? On the surface, very little, because all the instincts and impulses to which an ancient oriental despot was able to give free reign have been domesticated in our civilized way of life and, in times of peace at least, are being held in check. However, all these instincts and impulses are alive and operating in us—in every one of us.

Herod's insecurity is our insecurity—a grotesquely distorted but recognizable image of our insecurity. A two-year-old boy pinching his baby sister viciously is showing a bit of Herod's jealousy. Herod's spirit is at work in the pretty mother whose heart suddenly grows cold because her daughter looks just a shade too mature, too striking in that new dress. Herod's murderous impulse is being sublimated in the daily routine of the man who deliberately fails to help an associate in order to keep him at bay as a potential rival. Think of all the mean little things we do because of our fear of rivals: in the family circle,

*Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1938.

our profession, in our social life. Shades of rod!

Herod's evil mind is a mirror of our minds. The age it throws at us is exaggerated, no doubt, it is clearly recognizable. He was unable to lieve that anyone's motives could be fair and re because his own motives were so mixed and l. He was treacherous so he expected only achery. He was greedy, so he looked for greed everyone. He was confused and annoyed by the y appearance of goodness because he did not ow how to cope with it. In our own small way share in his sin. Someone says an unusually endly "Good morning!" to us and we wonder, What does he want?" Someone makes a generous t to a good cause and we wonder, "Is he after me business or is it just for prestige?" Our iends bid us good night after a nice party and wonder, "How many of these friends would er come back or do anything to help me if suddnly I lost everything?" Shades of Herod!

Herod's love of force is also a present fact in r hearts. Herod is dead. The Roman Empire dust. In our own day Hitler and Mussolini did eir dirty work and passed on. The saying of sus, "All who take the sword will perish by e sword," has proved to be true ten thousand mes. Still we do not learn. Still we fight—and en win—wars, but are unable to make peace cause we do not really trust the weapons of ace. We only trust the weapons of war. We raise llions for arms and give away a few skimpy illions in relief and technical assistance.

No, we do not put babies to the sword. We only rop bombs—bigger and better bombs—and the wful tragedy is that the last time we did it we had no choice, because we had refused to pay the price of peace by working with the infant League of Nations! That was yesterday. If some of our apostles of vengeance have their way, it might start again tomorrow. Nor will it ever end until we begin to believe—really believe—that peace cannot be secured by war and that what Jesus said about the other cheek and the second mile was not pious tommyrot but the only workable program of peace for both individuals and nations!

Meanwhile Herod's Christmas party remains on the record as an everlasting reminder of the futility of evil and the sure triumph of God. As Herod was unable to kill the Savior, no matter how dreadfully he raged and what a tragic toll he took, so are we unable to halt the march of the Prince of Peace. Whether we oppose him by active, violent means or—more dangerously—by lip service and an unholy effort to make him serve our ends, he always slips away from us. And his cause—God's own cause of peace and brotherhood—goes on.

Poor Marksmanship

PAUL SCHERER once said that a reputation for talking over the heads of the congregation is not an assurance of a profound mind; it might be a sign that the preacher is a poor marksman. This is a day for good marksmen. It is a day when the church must communicate eternal truth with clarity and sympathy. The Word still yearns to become form and substance in our midst.—*Ralph W. Loew, Holy Trinity Lutheran, Buffalo, New York.*

Communion Meditation for Advent

His Name Shall be Called Emmanuel

By John R. Kelly

II Corinthians 4:1-6.

IN the Gospel according to Matthew an angel appears to Joseph while he is sleeping to announce that the child Mary carries has been conceived of the Holy Spirit and is to be called Jesus. The Evangelist comments, "All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: 'Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and his name shall be called Emmanuel.'" He then adds an explanatory note: "Which means, God with us."

"Emmanuel!" "God with us!" Of all the titles given to Jesus, which is more glorious or more significant than this one? From the very beginning the power of God was at work. This was to be no ordinary baby. Though born in a barren, dirty stable, he was a King. Though raised in a mean village of no reputation, he was the Anointed One, the Promised One of Israel. This Jesus was truly Emmanuel, God with us; entering fully into the life of men.

In this phrase lies the fullness of the Christian

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gospel. Nevertheless on this Communion Sunday at least, these three aspects of God's truth are particularly revealed.

I

First of all, the birth of this baby was in introduction to the climax of the drama of God's action in history. The Old Testament contains a drama in which the main character never appears onstage. The drama of the Hebrew people centers around the response of the community to God's action. But it is God's acting that provides the pattern upon which the life of the people is woven. God calls the Hebrew people to their task of bringing all nations unto him. God chastens and rebukes the nation when it forgets its call. And through the prophets God makes a promise—the promise of a Messiah who will deliver the nation out of bondage and establish his rule on earth.

Now, in the fullness of time, the announcement is made. The climactic act of the drama is begun. Now is the time that the author of the play moves onstage as chief player. " 'His name shall be called Emmanuel' . . . God with us." The anticipation developed throughout the drama mounts to its peak, and in a new and startling way, God acts!

II

Second, in this moment the whole stage takes on a new hue. That which had been in the shadows is now brilliantly illumined. Because Emmanuel has come, shadows flee, pastels deepen, and background and costume become bright with new meaning. For now the purpose of the author is seen as he enters in the guise of an actor. He reveals himself and so bares the heart of the drama.

Then, why is it necessary for the author to appear in the play? Why is "God with us"?

In one of the church schools lessons for next Sunday, the story is told of a Hindu who had investigated and rejected Christianity. He could not believe that infinite God would become man. One day in a pasture he became interested in a colony of ants. Bending over the anthill to watch, his shadow fell across it. Immediately there was confusion among the insects. Workers dropped their burdens, warriors appeared to defend the city, and panic reigned. As the Hindu drew back the sun fell again on the anthill, and order was gradually restored.

But as he bent over it again, the fleeting patterns of panic reappeared. Idly he began to wonder how he could bridge the gap between man and insect to show the ants that his drawing near indicated nothing but sympathy and interest. The pondering became strangely intense until the idea gripped him that the only way this would be possible would be somehow to become an ant himself, accepting the risks and terrors of life in the sand and grass. Only then could he communicate the intentions of his human heart. Bent in the dust he had been thinking God's thoughts after him. Now he understood the meaning of the incarnation, God with us.

We do not mean that God has turned himself into a man. Rather, that the essence of God h taken flesh, that infinite love has been made sm in order to be seen by man. Yet we know, too, th we do not see this in the baby of Bethleher Christmas is the beginning of our drama climactic act, not the conclusion.

For the coming of the Christ always points tw ways. First, it points to God. For in this chi Emmanuel, God acts. And second, it points fro the stable, through the ministry of the man, Jesu to the cross. In the cross the act reaches its clima and in the words of Paul, we see "the light of th knowledge of the glory of God in the face Christ."

III

Finally, the announcement that God is with u points from the stable through the cross to thi Sunday. For the drama is not ended. The autho still works, and he has not drawn the curtain.

In a few moments we will participate in a serv ice of Holy Communion. This service is a witnes that God still acts. In the birth of Jesus, the com ing of Emmanuel, his promise is fulfilled—and th fulfillment of that promise is still going on.

As Christmas points first of all to God's action so Communion is a symbol of God's action. As play within a play it sums up and redramatize the theme of the greater drama. History is th drama of God's winning free men to salvation Communion is the dramatic microcosm of history It points to the promise of the upper room, th cross, the resurrection, and to the fact that Goo works for our salvation today. Communion is symbol of God's present action.

And Communion, like the birth of the Christ points ahead to future time. For the "God with us," the presence of God, in Communion is promised through all time and beyond time itself.

As we praise God at Christmas for the birth of Emmanuel, so we praise God in Communion for the same reason. God is with us. He comes to us; yea, is ever with us. In the face of Christ is the vision of God, and in his love is our peace forevermore.

Advent

AS I prepare within myself a way
For Thy pure feet to walk my desert soul,
How many crooked places must be straightened,
How many weak and broken things made whole!

By what abasement can I raise myself?
And by what exaltation be brought low?
All human measure of my stature fails:
How can *I* build the road where *Thou* shouldst go?

Thyself must be the measure and the plan;
Thyself must Thine own lodging house prepare.
But I shall watch the high road well, and cry
To all the wilderness that Thou art there.

SIEGMUND A. E. BETZ.

By Paul Hessert

Has Christ Made a Difference?

Many prophets and righteous men longed to see what you see and did not see, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it. Matthew 13:17.

CHRISTIANITY proclaims that in Jesus Christ, God has entered history to change forever the meaning of life and the destiny of men. It declares boldly that our system of reckoning time before Christ (B.C.) and in the year of our Lord (A.D.)—is only one manifestation of that great watershed divide of the world and men that took place in the birth of the Holy Child at Bethlehem. No matter how one tries to explain it, he cannot escape the claim that something is different now. It is on the lips of Jesus himself: "Many prophets and righteous men longed to see what you see and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it."

But there is a question we simply cannot avoid asking and answering, namely, is it actually so? Has Christ made all that difference in life? Have all these deep-seated desires and longings of the human spirit been satisfied in him? Has the world taken a different course since his coming? Has the history been God's? If our religion is at all honest, we must answer those questions.

Humanitarian Reasoning

There are always those who are just a bit shocked by such questioning, and because they are not willing to search their own hearts they give a quick and glib answer to cover their personal uncertainty. "Of course Christ has made a difference," they say. "Look how unwanted children were left along the banks of the Tiber to die in old Rome. No one seemed to protest the practice. Children had little value. But Christ changed that. He made it known that every child is dear to God; and now infanticide is virtually unknown.

"Or look at the lot of woman before Christ came. Her only hope was a compassionate husband. She had few rights so far as society was concerned. She dared not speak up in public. Just contrast her position in China or India today with that in America or even Europe if you want to see the difference that Christ has made.

"Or look how Christ has changed our treatment of the diseased. Once they were driven into the wilderness to die. They were made to carry bells like cattle and shout, 'Unclean, unclean!' to warn the healthy of their approach. Now there are hospitals and asylums and dispensaries; and nurses and doctors willing to help, aye, even give their lives for them if necessary.

"Has Christ made a difference? Man! What a foolish question! Of course he has made a difference! A tremendous difference!"

They Await the Second Coming

But I am not at all sure that that is the answer we are looking for. There was always kindness in the world. Oftentimes it was shortsighted, and we praise God that Jesus made it as broad as mankind, that he taught us our neighbor is whoever we find in need of our help. But the basic idea has not changed much from olden days when the little Shunammite family prepared a room so the prophet Elisha would have a home when he came to town. And that is not the difference that Christianity claims to have made—that it has achieved a little more kindness, a little more generosity, a little more heartfelt sympathy among the sons of men.

And because of that there are people who jump to the conclusion that up to now Christianity has made no real difference, that it cannot be judged by its present appearance but only by the second coming of Christ when evil shall be brought to an end. "That will mark the real difference," they say. "That is what we look forward to. It isn't yet. Christ has given us only the picture of what it will be—sometime off in the future.

"Look," they say, "suppose you take Jesus seriously and turn the other cheek when you are struck. Like as not you'll only be hit again. You refuse to return evil for evil in this dog-eat-dog world and you walk your own Via Dolorosa to the cross. You can't call this the Kingdom of God, can you? This surely is not the bright day God has promised the faithful! Until we have a world in which good and evil are set off in a black and white distinction, until good reaps its immediate reward of blessedness and evil of damnation, nothing important has changed. Yes, Christ presents us with the same choice men have always had. But until he comes again and God's Kingdom is set up on this earth there hasn't been much difference. We need to get ready for that big Day which is coming as certainly as death. Then the change will come."

The Kingdom Is Here

But while that teaching leans heavily on Jesus' words about the Day coming as a thief in the night, and how we ought to be ready to have all

(Continued on page 24)

PAUL HESSERT, professor of religion and philosophy at Adrian College in Michigan and former pastor of the Francesville-White Oak Charge of the Methodist Church in Indiana, preached this sermon while filling the pulpit of the Presbyterian Church at Holloway, Michigan. He received his theological education at Garrett Biblical Institute and the University of Edinburgh.

In the Fullness of Time

By Henry E. Kolbe

Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the King . . . Matthew 2:1.

HOW often we have heard and read the words of our text in the story of the birth of Jesus as it is told in the Gospel according to Matthew! They have become a part of the living poetry of the world, loved and repeated in reverent devotion in many lands and in many tongues through all the ages since they were written. And this has come about because of their association with the name of one who spoke as never man spoke—one in whom, according to an early estimate of him, "the whole fulness of deity dwells bodily."

But just because they are so much a part of the world's poetry, these words have, as it were, been worn smooth by our much handling even though in reverence and in love. They have, therefore, lost something of their deeper meaning, something of their real poignancy and their potential power.

I

Christ was born "in the days of Herod." In days when all Judea lay under the rule of one of its most cruel and heartless kings, a man who brooked no opposition that stood in his way, who stooped to all sorts of deceit and violence to gain his own ends; in days when the Jewish people almost literally writhed under their enforced subjection to Rome, with whose power Herod had allied himself in order to hold office—in days such as these, Jesus was born.

It was not a propitious time, men would say. Everywhere men lived in fear and trembling in the desert that was called "peace"—the dread *pax Romana,* Roman peace, the peace of military oppression on the one hand and of bondage and fear on the other. In every Judean village and town the presence of soldiers and the hated tax collectors reminded the people of their servitude to Rome. Men were subject to the absolute will of the emperor, who was not averse to using the might of his legions to maintain the order of empire. The taxing which forced Joseph to return to his home city of Bethlehem is a rather mild example of the arbitrary authority of Rome. It has been said that when Jesus was born there was only one free man on earth: Augustus Caesar. All others—at least in the Mediterranean world—were subject, in varying degrees, to his desires.

It was a time of social and political unrest throughout Palestine. Revolts flared spasmodically as men led futile rebellions against Herod or Rome. These revolts were always put down, often with much violence and bloodshed. Something of the cruelty of the times is indicated in the manner of suppression of a revolt which came shortly after the death of Herod, early in Jesus' boyhood, when the Roman official Varus crucified two thousand Jews at Jerusalem.

This was the situation which prevailed "when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king." It is not a pleasant picture but one needing to be painted in somber shades of dark gray and black. There was little of light to give men reason for hope. What light there was came from the flickering torches of those who led the rebellions against Rome and Herod—lights that served only to intensify the all-pervading darkness. It was a time when men's hearts began to grow weary with much waiting, when faith flagged and hopes dwindled to disappearance.

Suddenly, far to the East, there shone a star that led wise men toward Bethlehem. And shepherds who watched their sheep on the plains and hillsides near the town saw a vision as of angels and heard voices telling of the birth of a babe in that little Judean village—a babe who would be, in some strange way, the Messenger or even the Messiah of God, sent now, "in the days of Herod," to rescue captive Israel.

So it was that "in the days of Herod the king Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea." In days of despair, hope was born. In days of political and spiritual defeat, faith was born. When men looked upon one another with fear and hatred, love was born. When the armies of Caesar ruled the world, and those of Herod bound Judea in bands of iron, the Prince of Peace was born. In a time when "the grandeur that was Rome" ruled the whole earth, when the world's greatness was displayed in military pomp and armed power and the splendor of the imperial court, the Son of God was born to a

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ilean peasant woman in a stable in an obscure age in a far-off corner of the great empire. hen the night was darkest, the light of God an to glow!

II

So is it that God comes to men in their times of epest need and despair. For the birth of Jesus n the days of Herod" is a symbol of the deliver- ce of God, whom even "the wrath of men shall aise." To us, by our standards, it might seem the ost inauspicious of all times, but in the divine ovidence it was "in the fullness of time" that rist was born.

That is the source of inspiration and of hope r the world in which we live. For at this Christ- as season the world again is in pain and dark- ss, overfilled with fear and suspicion and hatred. our time as in that long ago, revolt flares as en strive for freedom and are suppressed by eat powers who seek to "maintain a desert and ll it peace." Herods and Caesars are again road in the world. A sick world cries aloud in ony. Men everywhere yearn for deliverance more than they that watch for the morning." A ep shadow hangs over all things, lit only by the ful lightnings of a world in conflict. And there no deliverer!

In such a time we need to remember that on the ght "when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of udea in the days of Herod the king," men did not now that in that manger-cradle there lay the orld's Savior. They did not see in that babe the ioneer of life, the Revealer of God, the Redeemer f mankind. Yet that night it was in the stable, nd not in the palace of the king nor in the garri- ons of the army nor in the caves where men lotted rebellion, that there lay the hope of Israel nd of the world.

We do not know what mysteries God has hid n the cradles of our time any more than Herod n Jerusalem and Caesar in Rome knew what was n the manger at Bethlehem that first Christmas ight long ago. Who knows now—in this day when he spiritual descendants of Herod and of Caesar talk the earth—in what cradle, perhaps in some bscure Bethlehem far removed from the great ourts of kings and from the busy highways of he world's commerce, there may lie the babe who n his tomorrows may speak the word and do the eed which will bring mankind nearer to that world of freedom and good will and peace of which he angels sang over Bethlehem that winter night? Who knows whence *our* deliverance will come?

For in the hour when hope turns hopeless, when faith degenerates into fatalistic acceptance of the way of the world, God sends forth his Spirit as he sent forth his Son, that his purposes may come alive in the lives and in the hearts of men. When days are dark—and days are always dark when Herods rule the earth—"the true light that enlightens every man" shines forth through the mists and the shadow. The Christ is born; the angels sing; and deliverance will come.

III

Nor is the political condition of the world the only likeness of our time to that of Herod. For today as then the inn—not the great hotels of the world's cities, but the inn of man's soul—is too crowded for the Christchild. We are too busy for the Christ spirit. Our lives are "so full of a number of things" that he is crowded out. How aptly was our state described by an unknown poet of the 17th century:

> But at the coming of the King of Heaven
> All's set at six and seven:
> We wallow in our sin,
> Christ can not find a chamber in the inn.
> We entertain him always like a stranger,
> And, as at first, still lodge him in the manger.

That is why life is so often flat. We are so busy with *things* that we have no room—or at best scant room—for *Christ*. And there is need now that we make our hearts humble and receptive, like that welcoming stable in Bethlehem. For it is into "broken and contrite hearts," which God does not despise, that the spirit of Christ—the spirit which brings forgiveness, love, new life—is reborn.

And he must be born in us now as in the stable long ago if Christmas is to have meaning. He must come alive in us as the spirit of humility and brotherliness and love. When our hearts cry out for deliverance from the darkness and sin of the world, we need to feel his spirit moving within us, bringing not simply the promise but the assurance of redemption and newness of life. When life seems empty and flat, when every worldly hope turns to ashes or becomes a phantom will-o'-the-wisp that leads to disillusion and despair, we need to hear his voice as did the fishermen beside the sea, who when he called, "Follow me," left nets and boats and families and all beside, to be with him, to be sent out by him to become fishers of men, to become men of whom it was said that "they turned the world upside down."

Then it may come to pass in our own experience that in the hour when darkness and storms sweep over our souls; when despair haunts our waking hours and trespasses on our dreams; when fears within and without assail and appall; when trials beset us behind and before and we know not where to turn; when we know in our souls the awful reality of that unanswered cry from the cross, "My God, my God: why hast *Thou* forsaken me?" then, in such a time as this, there may come to us the shining of the star, the song of the angels, the lowing of the cattle, and the sense of a Presence, *his* Presence. Then we may feel that the spirit of the Christ, the spirit of faith and hope and love and God, is born again in us.

IV

"Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the King." And that shall stand forever as a pledge of the care and concern of God for his own—of the love of the God who, when the world gropes through the darkness of conflict and fear and despair, gives a light and a song.

By Tom A. Whiting

Undiscovered Treasure

"You search the scriptures, because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness to me; yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life." John 5:39-40.

CHRISTIAN people take pride in saying that the Bible is the world's best-selling book. In this we are justified, but our shame comes to light when to be truthful we admit that though long a best seller, the Bible is also a most-neglected book.

Christians may stand on the Sabbath to sing in William W. How's "O Word of God Incarnate":

> We praise Thee for the radiance
> That from the hallowed page,
> A lantern to our footsteps
> Shines on from age to age.

But for many the Bible is neither lamp nor light. As a publishing venture it is a huge success; but as to its being read, this is quite another story. Multiplied thousands of people do read and profit from it daily, but other thousands own copies which they have never taken time to read; and when they do read, there is much which they do not understand. If the Bible, therefore, is a book of priceless treasure, as we have claimed it is, for the multitudes it is a treasure undiscovered.

And it is possible to read this book and still miss the treasure. Jesus pointed this out very explicitly on one occasion. It was the Jewish Sabbath and he had just healed an impotent man beside the pool of Bethesda. The Jews promptly challenged him for violating Sabbath observance, wherein he gave answer that this deed was from God. Then he proceeded to talk to them about their interpretation of the Scriptures. "You search the scriptures, because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness to me; yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life." They were ardent seekers for the truth, but they had not found it, and to such masters of antiquity this must have come as quite a shock which left them infuriated! But they missed the treasure as many today seek for it and miss it.

Misunderstanding and Oversight

There are people who read the Bible and confess with humility that they do not understand it. Others read and come away with curious beliefs which do more harm than good. For example, one reads that in the early days of the church it was predicted that Christians might handle snakes without being harmed. This becomes the test of faith in God to those who isolate certain scriptural texts, and a snake-handling cult emerges with its devotees working themselves into an emotional lather before handling a cottonmouth moccasin. If one dies from snake bite, it is attributed to lack of faith. Or consider another example: Solomon had many wives, as did other biblical figures. If this is in the Bible, it can be considered the will of God. So the religious man has a number of wives until he is checked by governmental decree. Or another: the early Christians spoke in tongues and many, reading related passages, feel that this is a gift to be sought. The list could be added to and the total is a tragic number who have never discovered the treasure that is in the Bible. How then may it be found?

How the Bible Came to Be

For one thing, one must have a *right method of search.* Indispensable is an understanding of how the Bible came to be. It must be seen as a historical document, covering hundreds of years in chronology. It was not dictated in a moment, but was the slow growth emerging from the struggles of a chosen people as God led them from a primitive state to a full revelation of himself. The acceptance of this historical approach is fundamental to any genuine understanding of the Scriptures. And this is precisely the reason many receive no profit from their reading. They pick the Bible up, open it at random, and dip in for some nugget of truth. Often that truth is found, but not without the dangers of wrong interpretation, and there is no sense of the continuity of revelation.

For many this book is to be taken literally, with every word of equal value. In some sort of mystical way, each word—even in the "begat" chapters—is supposed to teach a spiritual lesson. No verse, they maintain, is to be looked upon critically or with question, for to do so is blasphemous.

Henry Grady, speaking before a northern audience, began his famous address concerning the new south with the story of the old preacher who told some boys of a lesson he planned to read from the Bible the coming Sunday morning. The boys found the place and glued together some of the pages in a mischievous attempt to upset the old man. The next morning the old man read on the bottom of one page, "When Noah was one hundred and twenty years old he took unto him

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TOM A. WHITING since early 1954 has been minister of the First Methodist Church in Jesup, Georgia—his fourth charge in the South Georgia Conference. He is a graduate of Yale Divinity School.

lf a wife, who was"—here he turned the page d kept reading—"one hundred and forty cubits ng, forty cubits wide, built of gopher wood and vered with pitch inside and out." Somewhat zzled, he stopped and read the passage again. e then raised his eyes and said to the audience, My friends, this is the first time I ever read this the Bible, but I accept it as an evidence of the sertion that we are fearfully and wonderfully ade." Such an uncritical mind and simple faith e taken by many to be the correct attitude toard the Scriptures, regardless of the inconsistenes involved.

Some months ago, I fell into a discussion with n utterly sincere young man concerning certain assages in the Bible. I told him that in the light the revelation which had come to us in its fullss in Jesus, I would have to judge that particular atement by the spirit of Jesus. He was a believer h a type of verbal inspiration—I believe in a type, o!—and this to him was open sacrilege. So he relied, "What you are saying then is that you do ot believe the Bible." Nothing could have been rther from the truth, but for me to question one atement and judge its development by the fullest ruth which came to the world in Jesus, seemed to his young man to be irreverent. But he committed he same error as certain Jews involved in our ext who searched the Scriptures and found not fe but narrow legalism. The Bible is like a telecope—not to be looked at, but to be looked hrough. And the image which we see is that of hrist!

Progressive Revelation

We must commit ourselves to belief in progresive revelation. This is plain when one studies he concepts of God to be found in ancient writngs. Some truths were learned of God in the ilderness wanderings. The Ten Commandments ere given there. The prophets received more of he revelation, rising to a crescendo in Jeremiah ho spoke of the "law . . . [written] upon their earts." Amos had talked of justice, Hosea of love; nd Isaiah followed in their steps to speak of the holiness" of God and the purity of life. In Jereniah prophetic religion seemed to reach its height. But David and other sweet singers of Israel spoke f quiet devotion and communion with God. From his devotional spirit came the Twenty-Third Psalm, which has never been surpassed in any writing. But with all of this, in the fullness of ime a child was born! His name was Jesus. He as the Son of God and in him all law and rophecy came to fulfillment. All before him were o be looked upon as "thieves and robbers" if hey did not point to him. Other revelation of God, man had received, but Jesus was revelation supreme and therefore judged all that had come before him.

Now it is in this light that we must read and study the Bible. For me the Bible is no less divinely inspired as I follow the development of a people whom God was leading upon a divine pilgrimage, always keeping in mind the apex of that development which was in Jesus. This makes sense of weighty chapters, obscure passages, fantastic imagery, bloody warfare, weird theology and strange social customs which one finds in the study of this people. These become not tests of our faith but parts that fit into the whole of progressive revelation.

Remarkable Qualities

But what is the nature of the treasure which is to be found? For one thing, it is *endurable*. Moth and rust cannot affect it. Mean and worldly men cannot take it from us for long. Adverse conditions cannot strip us of it. Chance and change affect it little. Jesus said: "Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away." Cruel and vicious forces have been spent against this Holy Word, but yet it stands. No tyrant has been able to destroy it, and its dissemination is greater today than ever in its history. In over a thousand dialects and tongues, men and women and children read the story of God and his dealings with man. The Bible has endured and will endure, because it is of God and of that which is eternal!

And, too, it is *instruction*. Here we learn the truth about ourselves and our relationships with fellowman and with God. We learn that God loves us, that he created us lower only by a little than the angels, and that he has given us dominion over the earth and its creatures. We learn of the nature of sin and of God's warnings to us concerning sin's penalty. But here we also find hope in the cosmic power of a life laid down upon a cross, and in the enervating presence of the Spirit of God among men. Also we receive guidance in our social attitudes from the all-embracing compassion of Jesus. We are taught that God is no respecter of persons for all are precious in his sight and stand on a common level at the foot of the cross. As to spiritual manners we are taught the law of love which moves beyond that which is required to what Jesus called the second mile. All of this and more we learn from our Bibles—not from proof texts, but from the spirit of the Word which gives life.

Help from Memorized Passages

Then, in a sense the Bible is *insurance*. Having once found our place with Christ in discipleship, we now find that temptation is our greatest foe. Here the Bible is of infinite worth! The Psalmist said, "I have laid up thy word in my heart that I might not sin against thee." Once I heard a young man say that during the war years he was thankful for passages from the Bible that he had memorized as a youth. While waiting for an attack from the enemy and tempted toward uncontrollable fear, he would lift these treasures from his heart and remember them for strength. Another friend once told me that during a meeting in which his honor was being abused, he kept himself under control by quoting to himself appropriate Biblical passages which dealt with his temptations of the moment. In my own seminary, which happens to be Yale, students were required to memorize long

sections of the Bible in addition to the more formal study, and I for one profited from it.

Help for Each of Us

It is interesting that Jesus so used Scripture. When he underwent his greatest temptation in the wilderness, he called to memory strong passages from the Old Testament writings which gave him great strength and comfort. He reached across the years into the Book of Deuteronomy (8:3) to hold on to truths which God had given his people. "Man shall not live by bread alone," he said when tempted to turn stones into bread, "but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God." "You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve," he replied to the tempter when all the kingdoms of the world were held before him. "You shall not tempt the Lord your God," answered Jesus when he was tempted to soar from the pinnacle of the Temple and create a following through display and divine spectacle. Each time the tempter came, Jesus quickly turned mind and heart to the treasures of Scripture and they held him steady to his chosen course. And for us too the Bible has such protection. It is a sound psychological principle that whatever gets the mind gets us, and if these sacred words become a part of thinking they also become the strength of our living. Thus it is vital to immerse oneself in them.

But the Bible is also a *book of worship*. Prayer and worship are at the center of the Christian experience, and no better devotional help can be found than the Bible. In fact, one of the dangers in the plethora of devotional material available to us today is that it may become a substitute for the reading of the Scriptures. The newer translations of the Bible make it most readable and understandable, and we ought to be making for ourselves a catalog of passages that help us. Whatever our need, there are helpful passages which can lift us in our devotional life.

Dr. John Mackay, president of the Princeton Theological Seminary, in one of his books relates a devotional experience. In quiet contemplation, surrounded by a number of books, he reached for this Book of books that spoke to the condition of his own needy life. How often has this been true with us. Other books are helpful, but it is this Book that speaks to our condition!

Inexhaustible Treasure

David Livingstone in Africa had made many discoveries which he was eager to share with the civilized world, but he came one day to an experience which might have ended it all. His party reached the confluence of the Loange and Zambezi rivers. Neighboring tribes sensed the presence of his party and during the night the war fires burned. Faced with flight in the black night of the jungle, he opened his Bible. There he read familiar words: "Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world." Dr. Livingstone said, "It is the word of a gentleman of the most sacred and strictest honor." His fears subsided. He abandoned thought of stealing away and risking the danger of the night. The next day his party left unmolested. He had found help in the Book of his faith.

It is estimated today that over 400 million Bibles are in circulation, but the main consideration is a personal one. Do you have a Bible? Is it read? There is an old legend about a Roman youth named Fortunatus who had a bag in which there was a gold coin. Each time he removed the coin, another took its place. So it is with the Bible. It is a treasure inexhaustible! But does the Bible influence our lives? Universal Bible Sunday is a reminder of this gift of God to us and of what it can mean if we but open the Book and read.

Prayer for a City

At Chicago Sunday Evening Club

By Royald V. Caldwell

Pastor, Faith United Church of Christ, Chicago

OUR FATHER, since we always pray, "Thy Kingdom Come," call us out that we may see that our city is not yet the city of God. May the ever-present Spirit of Christ cause us to face our Jerusalem with compassion, concern and the knowledge that there is no abiding city except the City of God.

We pray in gratitude for this city and its possibilities. We plead Thy blessing and benediction to make this a holy city.

We are thankful for men and women of vision who had no little dreams and for their descendants now among us who have vision.

We bless Thee for our centers of industry and steel; for our centers of transportation by land, sea and air; for our centers of commerce, finance and trade; for our centers of education, communication and information; for our centers of medical healing, education and research; for our centers of art and music; for our centers of religious life, our training centers, seminaries and churches.

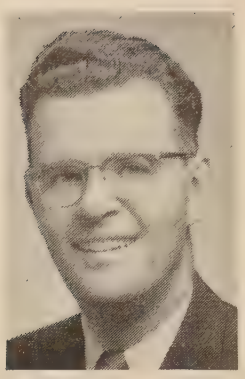
Help us to know that the moral pattern of our community is woven from the multiple fibers of our individual lives. Remind us that this never-ending pattern is being woven minute by minute —endlessly—and that the fabric is weakened, forever, by threads of cheating, dishonesty, immorality, irresponsibility and sin.

Redeem Thy people, Lord, one by one, starting with each of us. Then help us, as Thy children, to stand steadfastly against this evil day and people, to rebuild broken-down cities as did Nehemiah, or to build a new city in which righteousness is exhalted.

We are Thine, O Lord. Thou dost know us by name. Our needs are likewise known to Thee. As we wait upon Thee, renew our strength and answer the secret yearning of our heart.

We pray in the Spirit of Christ Jesus. Amen.

hree Living Scriptural Verses
d Two Artists' Lives



The Doors of Life

By George A. Johnson

"Knock, and it will be opened to you." Luke 11:9.
A wide door for effective work has opened to me, d there are many adversaries. I Corinthians 6:9.
"Behold, I have set before you an open door, hich no one is able to shut . . ." Revelation 3:8.

THE most famous and perhaps the most beautiful doors in the world are the bronze gates of orenzo Ghiberti, made for the baptistery at lorence, Italy. Two sets of doors were completed y this incomparable sculptor. One depicts scenes om the Old Testament; the other, events in the fe of Christ. Some decades after they were finhed and installed, Michelangelo declared that ey were "worthy to be the gates of paradise."

'Knock, and It Will Be Opened'

Some of the most significant passages of Scripure have reference to doors. One is found in Luke 1: "Knock, and it will be opened to you."

Many people have felt that Jesus was too exravagant in his claims for prayer: that all one ad to do was ask and he would receive, seek and e would find, knock and the door of whatever he anted would be opened to him. But the verse uggests to me that opportunity comes only to hose who make an effort. The man who knocks—hat is, the one who takes the trouble, who has the ourage, who is willing to undertake a risk, will ave the door of opportunity opened to him.

It is interesting how Ghiberti was selected to ake his famous doors. In 1401 the city of lorence held a contest among the artists of the ity and surrounding areas to decide who should onstruct the doors for the local baptistery. Varius guilds in the city named artists to represent hem, and Ghiberti, chosen by the guild of merhants to be their candidate, won.

But what if he had never made the effort to nter the competition?

One of the mysteries of this world is that God o constructed it that nothing comes but at the price of an effort. For centuries primitive peoples had been living in the Nile Valley and had been content with an inferior civilization requiring little exertion. Then—no one knows why—in the dim reaches of prehistoric man, a group of pioneers, dissatisfied with things as they were, developed the beginnings of a civilization, the results of which are still benefiting the world. But Egyptian civilization was born only as the result of effort.

From my studies of art I recall the early and very primitive attempts at sculpture on the part of the ancient tribes of Greece. In them there is no indication of the great masterpieces to come. People then were content with shoddy, inferior work, produced casually and carelessly, with just enough effort to get by. But miraculously—again no one knows why—pioneers laid the foundations of a mighty civilization, culminating in the glorious Age of Pericles, which was so demanding in its cries for perfection that an artist was mobbed and driven from Athens when it was learned that he had been careless in finishing the side of a statue that faced a wall. The glory of Greece came only because people were willing to expend effort to produce it.

'Nothing Will Come of Nothing'

The fact is that everything which has been uplifting and constructive to mankind came only because men were willing to expend energy above and beyond what was considered normal. Certainly this was true in the case of Lorenzo Ghiberti. While God gave him artistic talent, it could be released only through the artist's will. Long hours of devoted effort were necessary to produce a sculptor of his ability. Only Ghiberti's tireless zeal and his willingness to be content with nothing less than the best he could produce, resulted in the doors second to none on earth.

Do you know how long the artist spent on his gates? It was only after 21 years that he was willing to call the first set completed. And a similar period was spent in producing the second set. Perhaps it was Ghiberti's example which led Leonardo da Vinci, a later artist, to exclaim, "O God, thou givest us everything—at the price of an effort." "Knock, and it will be opened to you."

Paul wrote his first letter to the Corinthians from Ephesus. In it he told his friends in Corinth

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that he hoped to come to them soon, but that "a wide door for effective work" in Ephesus had opened to him and he felt he should stay there longer. Moreover, he went on to assert, "there are many adversaries."

'A Wide Door'

It is strange that Paul would couple "a wide door for effective work" and "adversaries" together. We would doubtless argue that the best work could be done without opposition. But not Paul; he counted in his competition. This thought suggests that difficulty and opportunity go hand in hand.

What if Ghiberti in the contest of the Florentine baptistery doors had been afraid of competition? With all the capable contestants against him, he could have despaired and said, as he shrugged his shoulders, "What's the use? I'll never win anyway." In the gifted Filippo Brunelleschi, Ghiberti knew he had taxing competition. But Ghiberti faced it, and doubtless because of that competition exerted his best efforts, and won.

How often it is that opposition brings the most benevolent and far-reaching results. Out of the rigors of fighting the frontier contests with disease and battles with the Indian came the sturdy New Englander, the plucky Pennsylvanian and the courageous Virginian, whose descendants one day spread over a continent.

As Edmund Burke once expressed it, "If there were no difficulties, there would be no success; if there were nothing to struggle for, there would be nothing to be achieved." This fact is illustrated from nature itself. A famous scientist of the last century, Alfred Wallace, once reported trying to help an emperor moth free itself from its cocoon. Wallace felt he was doing the creature a favor by splitting the cocoon with a knife, but once freed the moth died quickly. You see, the struggle within the cocoon is nature's way of developing the insect's wings and of sending to its body the important life-giving juices.

"A wide door for effective work has opened to me, and there are many adversaries," wrote Paul to the Corinthians. Difficulty and opportunity go together.

'An Open Door'

The book of Revelation has a very inspiring reference to a door in which Christ says to the church at Philadelphia in Asia Minor, "Behold, I have set before you an open door, which no one is able to shut." Surely that verse refers to a classic Christian truth: with Christ there is no lasting discouragement or defeat. The man who trusts in him has an open door always, which none or nothing can close.

Ghiberti won the contest of the baptistery doors in 1401. But there were many defeated competitors. We know what happened to one of them. Filippo Brunelleschi was a most energetic and able man. He had entered the contest naturally hoping to win, but Ghiberti beat him. Interestingly enough, the panel, "The Sacrifice of Isaac," which Brunelleschi made is still preserved, as is Ghiberti's, and the two are so fine that we can understand the trouble the judges must have had in deciding who the victor should be.

It was a cruel blow to Brunelleschi's pride to be beaten by Ghiberti. There was nothing he coveted more at the time than to be selected as the one to make the glorious doors. But, a study in patience and perseverance, he took his defeat well, congratulated the victor and went on about his work.

For many years little or nothing was heard from him. Then the city of Florence conducted another contest. With the baptistery taken care of, the city fathers were determined to complete their gothic cathedral with a dome larger than all others on earth. So in 1417 a contest was begun to select the architect for this structure. Brunelleschi hesitated a long time before entering the struggle. He had been hurt before and it would be hard to go down to defeat again. But his Christian convictions prevailed. He constructed a model and presented it. Out of many contestants, his entry won the prize.

Triumph over Defeat

Significantly enough, Brunelleschi's dome, begun in 1420 and completed 41 years later, was epoch-making. Nothing like it had ever been constructed before. An octagonal, double-shell structure, the dome measured over 139 feet in internal diameter. But it was so marvelously designed that from the outside it does not seem as large as it really is. And, although tremendous in size, it appears in perfect symmetry and balance with the rest of the building.

Brunelleschi's dome was the model for that of St. Peter's in Rome. Michelangelo, St. Peter's architect, came often to study Brunelleschi's masterpiece, and is said to have remarked of it:

> I will make her sister
> Larger indeed, but not more beautiful.

Moreover, Michelangelo, in love with Florence and with everything about it, and in particular with Brunelleschi's dome, requested that he be buried in Santa Croce Church, whose doors open on the finest view of what Brunelleschi built.

The Florentine cathedral dome is a tribute to a man who triumphed over defeat. Doubtless the immortal architect's failure to be selected to make the baptistery doors was God's way of saying, "Do not be discouraged. I have something far greater than this in store for you." Sarah Knowles Bolton in her poem "The Inevitable," paid tribute to a man such as Brunelleschi:

> I like the man who faces what he must
> With steps triumphant and a heart of cheer;
> Who fights the daily battle without fear;
> Sees his hopes fail, yet keeps unfaltering trust
> That God is God; that somehow, true and just
> His plans work out for mortals . . .
> . . . he alone is great
> Who by a life heroic conquers fate.*

*Sarah Knowles Bolton, "The Inevitable," *Poems of Sarah K. Bolton* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell). Used by permission.

ristmas Day

Call to Worship

ET us now go even unto Bethlehem
and see this thing which is come
pass, which the Lord hath made
wn unto us.
or unto us a Child is born, unto
a Son is given: and the government
ll be upon his shoulder: and his
ne shall be called Wonderful, Coun-
or, the Mighty God, the Everlasting
ther, the Prince of Peace.

Invocation

MOST merciful God, who hast so loved the world as to give Thine y-begotten Son, that whosoever be-veth in him should not perish but ve everlasting life; vouchsafe unto we humbly pray Thee, the precious t of faith, whereby we may know at the Son of God is come; and ng always rooted and grounded in e mystery of the Word made flesh, y have power to overcome the rld, and gain the blessed immor-ity of heaven; through the merits the same incarnate Christ, who eth and reigneth with Thee in the ity of the Holy Spirit, ever one d, world without end. Amen.—*The ok of Common Order of the Church Scotland.*

Pulpit Calendar

Dec. 4—2nd Sunday in Advent.
Dec. 11—Universal Bible Sunday.
Dec. 18—4th Sunday in Advent.
Dec. 25—Christmas.
Dec. 31—New Year's Eve.
Jan. 1—New Year's Day.
Jan. 1-8—Universal Week of Prayer.
Jan. 6—Epiphany.
Jan. 8—1st Sunday after Epiphany.
Jan. 15—2nd Sunday after Epiphany.
Jan. 15-21—Church and Economic Life Week.
Jan. 17-24—Week of Prayer for Christian Unity.
Jan. 22—3rd Sunday after Epiphany.
Jan. 29—4th Sunday after Epiphany.
Jan. 29-Feb. 5—Youth Week.
Feb. 5—5th Sunday after Epiphany.
Feb. 12—Race Relations Sunday.
Feb. 15—Ash Wednesday.
Feb. 17—World Day of Prayer.
Feb. 19—1st Sunday in Lent. Day of Prayer for Students.
Feb. 19-26—Brotherhood Week.
Feb. 26—2nd Sunday in Lent.

(Pulpit Calendar lists dates in the calendar of the Christian year and other observances of national or religious significance.)

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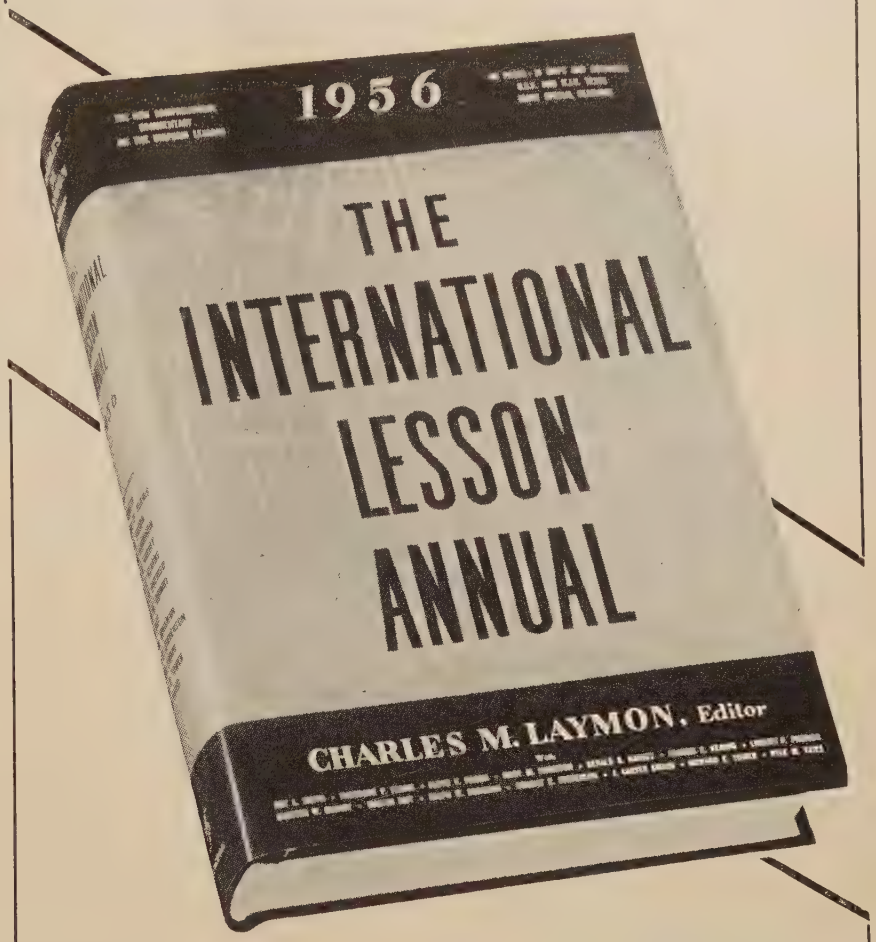

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Pulpit Patter

By Morton S. Enslin

Yes, But Will He Come?

"HAVE him, if you want to, but he'll never be invited to speak in our school as long as I am president!" My friend's words made quite a stir in the group of ministers, planning for a meeting of more than ordinary importance and arguing as to who was to be invited to give the principal address. The man they were considering was definitely big time, and apparently most of the group were ready to vote for him. When my friend was asked for the reason he had spoken as he had, his reply was crisp: "He accepted an invitation last year. A few days before the meeting he wrote me that he would not be able to come, for in the interim he had accepted another engagement for the same date. I did a little detective work and found that the fee for the preferred job was twice what we had offered and he had accepted." Without a dissenting voice the man under discussion was eliminated and another selected.

And they were dead right in so acting. A man who will cancel an engagement to take another because of a larger fee displays a lack of integrity which is fatal.

Pay As You Go

I am far from justifying the practice of too many organizations—and churches stand high in such a list—which try to get free speeches and, on occasion, free sermons from ministers, with the fictional excuse that said visitor will be amply repaid in honoraria of a spiritual sort from the heavenly paymaster, and should accordingly rejoice at the opportunity for all additional chances to preach the word. There are many occasions when a minister is happy to be of service, and utterly without thought of pay; but in far too many cases reluctance to pay is nothing but a cheap and petty racket, utterly unworthy of a self-respecting church. For the theme song, "I'm glad salvation's free," might well be substituted frequently the more homely, but equally inspired, "Pay as you go, or don't go."

It is entirely proper for a man to decline when invited to accept an appointment, be it to preach, lecture or give an ecclesiastical pep talk at the fall kick-off dinner in a neighboring church. But once he has accepted the invitation, it is simple decency to go through with it regardless of what subsequent more lucrative bids may chance to come. Nevertheless, I see this principle violated every day.

So far as preaching is concerned, the parish minister may be less often guilty. His own job—unless his contract enables him to be a peripatetic gadabout—will usually be a support, even if his conscience be a bit weak. For him the danger will usually be at times other than Sunday morning. For the more nondescript horde of gladly available pulpit suppliers—theological professors and students are in the forefront here—it is more of a problem. An opportunity comes. It is not a very startling one, but it is better than nothing. Invitations are few; he likes to preach; grocers' bills run high. He accepts. Then, as so often happens, another invitation comes, this time to a bigger church, an easier trip, and—hardest of all to resist—a larger fee. Unless my experience has been most unusual, many preachers here display the fatal Achilles' heel. How easy it is to call up a friend or colleague and get him to pinch-hit in the lesser game, or, if you chance to be a professor, to pass it on to a student with fatherly words as to the great importance of cultivating this latter church, of keeping public relations in A-1 order, and hence the absolute necessity for you to violate your long practice of never breaking an engagement. It is still easier to do as the man mentioned in the first paragraph did, just write that you can't come.

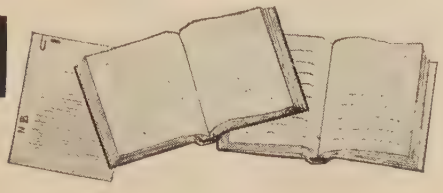
Story with a Moral

Some years ago in a professional society to which I belong an eminent scholar, not a member, was invited to present a paper at the next year's opening session. He promptly and gladly accepted. During the year he was constantly reminded by judicious letters from the proper officers, and repeatedly told that later sessions were dependent on his paper which would introduce the theme. Each letter was acknowledged. Came the day of the meeting. The first session was about to start. The speaker did not arrive. Five minutes after the meeting was scheduled to begin he stuck his head in the door, beckoned to the officer who had invited him, told him in embarrassed, but not convincing,

whispers that he "had just been told" that he was expected to read a paper to that society, but that it must have been a mistake as he knew nothing about it. Since the said officer was a methodical man, he had all the correspondence in his briefcase and thus was able to show the reluctant guest the several letters which said guest had written, accepting the assignment and subsequently outlining the proposed treatment. But the eminent cleric turned tail and fled. Why? Shortly before, a friend from England had arrived in the city and had been invited to give a lecture that day in the institution where we were meeting, and our guest wanted to hear him. Also we paid no honorarium. Our meeting was naturally wrecked. The moral? For years the eminent gentleman sought to become a member of the society he had so cavalierly flouted, but curiously, he never was successful in his quest.

Yes, I confess to a great fondness for the word of the Psalmist: "Who swears to his own hurt and does not change." To some of his colleagues such a man will seem hopelessly queer and behind the times; on good authority it is said that he has to his credit a substantial down payment on a modest abode on the holy hill.

Nota Bene



THE medical benefits which are lengthening the span of life mean that more and more people are going to have to wonder about what to do with old age. Unless some catastrophe intervenes, we shall become a group of elderly persons who are either running things, or who are annoyed because we are not running things. Yet as Christians we should know that longevity in itself, as a technological improvement of the 20th century, solves absolutely nothing. If life is empty, then 80 years of emptiness can only be regarded as twice as vacuous as 40 years of emptiness.—*David E. Roberts,* The Grandeur and Misery of Man *(New York: Oxford University Press, 1955).**

FAITH is not credulity. You do not leave your intellect in the narthex when you go to church.—*Charles B. Templeton,* Life Looks Up *(New York: Harper, 1955).**

"THOSE were the days . . . when you could be a physicist without feeling guilty; the days when it was still possible to believe that you were working for the greater glory of God. Now they won't even allow you the comfort of self-deception. You're paid by the Navy and trailed by the FBI. Not for one moment do they permit you to forget what you're up to. *Ad majorem Dei gloriam?* Don't be an idiot! *Ad majorem hominis degradationem*—that's the thing you're working for."—*Aldous Huxley,* The Genius and the Goddess *(New York: Harper, 1955).**

AFTER the death of King George V, his body was being carried through the streets of London on a gun carriage. His crown had been placed on top of the flag-covered coffin. As the cortege moved on, the cross, which is part of the symbolism of the English crown, was jolted loose and fell to the street. One of the sailors marching behind the gun carriage picked it up, took it to the commanding officer, and, saluting, said, "This cross fell off, sir. It must be replaced." The officer was a little bewildered by the untoward happening, and he asked, "Must it be replaced now?" "Yes, sir," replied the sailor, "the crown is never complete without the cross." That is what we Christian people believe.—*Frederick M. Meek,* The Life to Live *(New York: Oxford University Press, 1955).**

OUR age has not avoided delusions of grandeur by getting rid of God. On the contrary, it has shown very clearly that when men stop worshiping God, they often begin to play God themselves in one way or another. Perhaps you have heard the story of how a certain tycoon once said to Dr. Joseph Parker: "I'm a self-made man, you know." And Dr. Parker replied: "Sir, you have lifted a heavy burden of responsibility from the shoulders of the Almighty."—*David E. Roberts,* The Grandeur and Misery of Man *(New York: Oxford University Press, 1955).**

THE non-conformist who refuses to let the institution confine him and bind him is the one upon whom the future of the race rests. The animals that developed the spinal column and the backbone, the vertebrates, were the animals that were the non-conformists. And the rest of them remained as jelly fish or else they turned into clams. And it is the same story for our human kind.—*Frederick M. Meek,* The Life to Live *(New York: Oxford University Press, 1955).**

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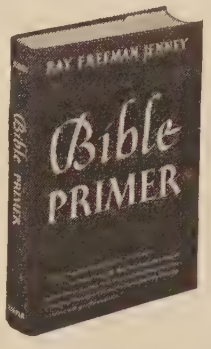

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Has Christ Made a Difference?

(Continued from page 13)

our deeds exposed to the light, it does not do justice to that other element of his teaching that the great event has already taken place. "Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing," he told the congregation at Nazareth. "You who are listening to me are actually hearing the things that the greatest of the prophets only dreamed of hearing. This Kingdom of God, this goal of your vision, it is not far off: it is here!"

Once when Jesus healed a man and the Pharisees charged that he did it by Satan's power, he asked, "Is it then by sorcery that your own sons do works of healing?" "No, of course not," they replied. "That is by the power of God." "Well," he answered, "if it is by the power of God, then the Kingdom is already here. This is one of its manifestations. The blind see, the deaf hear, the lame walk. The Kingdom is coming, true enough, but the only way you can be ready for i is by living its life now. And whe you do that, then it is already her for you."

If that sounds too strange to under stand, think of something more a par of our usual vocabulary: freedom. Th only way one gains freedom is by act ing as though he actually had it. Fre speech is not obtained by havin leaders gathered around a conferenc table suddenly decide to have it. Fre speech is obtained by speaking out Expression of opinions and criticism is free speech—not a sentence writte into a constitution or other document And conversely, when one uses it, h has it regardless of what the law says The only way our fathers got th rights we enjoy today was by acting as though they had them: by declaring truth regardless of whom it involved by holding their meetings regardless of who gave or refused permission; by worshiping as they saw best regard less of what church was declared legal and official. Living as though they had freedom, they did have it.

Blessed Heritage

When William Lloyd Garrison saw the arrival of a slave ship at Baltimore with eighty men chained together on a narrow shelf between decks, he wrote a blistering newspaper editorial that landed him in jail. Even when he went north he did not escape persecution for his views. He was once tied to a horse and dragged through the cobblestone streets of Boston. "You cannot speak thus about slavery!" he was ordered. But he did. Remember those famous lines: "I am in earnest. I will not equivocate, I will not excuse, I will not retreat a single inch. And I will be heard!" It has been people like William Lloyd Garrison who have given us a heritage of freedom because they dared live as though it were their possession.

And it has been people like St. Stephen of old who have given us the heritage of the Kingdom of God here on earth. "Don't you know," his persecutors heckled him, "that this Christ is only a dream? Don't you know that this is the same hard world where force has the upper hand? Don't you know that you cannot live as though your Jesus was king?" But Stephen did. And when his body went limp from the jagged wounds torn by the stones hurled at him in hatred, his last words showed them he was already living in that Kingdom Christ proclaimed. "Lord," he prayed, "do not hold this sin against them."

These people who have given us the Christian heritage asked themselves, "Suppose the Kingdom of God were actually here. How would we act? What would we do? How would we treat other men? How would we react when we were mistreated?" And of course, knowing the life of Jesus on earth, they saw that picture of steadfast goodness and resolute right-

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isness. And they said to themselves, those things we can live as ough the Kingdom were here right w. Why wait for some far off time? y not let these days be touched h the glory of God's final reign?" What is the Kingdom of God? It is e rule of God. It is where men obey d first of all—not just in so-called ligious duties, but in all of life. hen you and I obey God, his rule s come for us. When by his grace make love our aim, as St. Paul ges us, then it has come for us. arthquakes and rumors of wars ve nothing to do with it. The Kingm of God is here when we act as ough it were here, by giving our e's direction into God's hands.

The Opportunity Is Ours

Of course there were always those ho tried to live true to God regardss of circumstances. Christ hasn't anged that. But the best of them ad to look forward to some future me when God would set things right. eread your Psalms and note how any of them plead for God to vindiate a cause. There seems to be the aunting uncertainty that the rightous life may not be worth the effort. Turn the tables, O Lord, and set e on top." That is understandable. But it is different since Christ has ome, because the saints do not need o look forward to a future vindication o justify their stand. The fellowship ith God they already enjoy is its own indication. When Paul and Silas are hrown into prison, they do not pray or vindication: they sing hymns of raise! When Francis of Assisi eaves his father's wealth forever to o about as Jesus did, penniless but ich with the wealth of heaven, there s no pained expression of martyrdom n his lips. Instead, he sings a hymn f praise:

All creatures of our God and King,
Lift up your voice and with us sing,
O praise him! O praise him!

Confident Joy

"I will cling to the old rugged cross, and exchange it some day for a crown," goes the familiar Gospel song. It misses the point. The Christian has his cross, but he has the crown along with it. It is not, "I bear so much suffering and God will then recompense me with so much joy." It is rather, "I walk this way because it is Christ's way. That is its own justification." The same thought is found in the first epistle of John: "He who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him." It is not, "Love now and you will be a part of God's Kingdom." It is, "Love now and you *are* a part of God's Kingdom." Christ has made the difference. The Kingdom of God is already here. The Scripture has been fulfilled. We have the opportunity to have that blessedness we have wanted—not hope for it: have it!

That is the great difference Christ has made: he has already brought us that joyous confidence—not the joy that is always declaring, "Oh, I'm just so happy," and at the same time is grumbling about how no one respects a true Christian, and what a burden the unsaved are, and how stubborn they can be, and what trials the Christian has. That may be joy to some people, but it sounds more like whining.

This confident joy that Christ has brought is something else. It is an almost bewildered amazement that God is good enough to let us share the blessings of heaven right now, that even among each other on earth we can have the same love that exists between Paul and John and the others in heaven. Aye, we look forward to the consummation of it all, the complete Kingdom true to God's plan. But it is enough to love in his Kingdom now. We realize that unless we can love our brother now, and forgive him for the sake of Christ when he harms us; that unless we can relinquish our hold on the share of our possessions that belongs now to God; that unless we can

(Continued on page 28)

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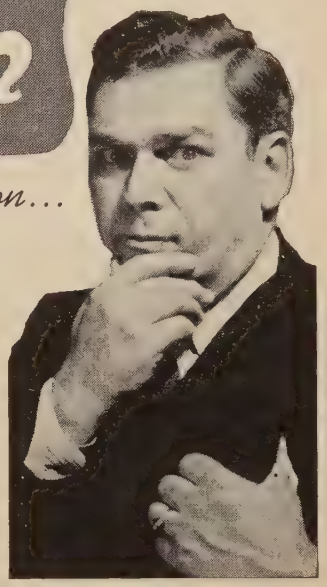

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ROUNDUP

Aids for Advent

SERMONS ON THE NATIVITY. By **Lancelot Andrewes.** 308 pages. Baker Book House, $2.75. For a long time Lancelot Andrewes was a name for the historians. Those that remembered him at all recalled that he was an English divine of the late 16th, early 17th centuries, that he had something to do with the translation of the King James version of the Bible, that his private devotions were beautiful but in Greek. Then, in our time, those prayers were republished in their English translation, two or three new biographies appeared, and T. S. Eliot wrote a well-known essay lauding Bishop Andrewes for his literary genius. Last but far from least comes a volume of his sermons. Appropriate to the present season, these are the Christmas sermons. In a way, this is the most important item so far in the Andrewes revival, for it was as a preacher that he made his most forceful impact upon the still-plastic Anglican church.

There are 17 sermons here, all preached on Christmas days. They are long—18 closely printed pages is average. They are incredibly many-pointed: four or five sub-sub-points to each of the four or five sub-points to each of the four or five main points in each sermon. None would get far in any congregation today. But oh how far it is hoped they will get in many studies in many manses! Here is the most imaginative and refined expository preaching ever. Here are meanings you never saw before, but all biblically meant. The language is rich, with much word play. Sometimes it is amusingly playful, baptizing that old vernacular in a way that we know scandalized the Puritans. But it won't scandalize us. Instead it delights and illuminates. And because he always paraphrases his frequent Latin phrases, you even get to feeling learned.

WHAT IS VITAL IN RELIGION. By **Harry Emerson Fosdick.** 238 pages. Harper, $3.00. In the language of the ring, "The winner, and still the champion, Harry Emerson Fosdick!" Here he is again, in a new book of sermons (we must all refuse to accept it as his last, which is how he announces it), a greater preacher than ever. Here is the accustomed wonderful inevitability of structure, the crystalline logic of the argument, the wealth of illustration always kept well short of overwhelming the whole, the exactly-right language, the exactly-right topics. In addition, there is the deepening and ever-warmer evangelical note which has been constantly nurtured and enriched through the Fosdick career. And if I mistake not, there is a new personal note in these sermons. Dr. Fosdick witnesses not just on the basis of his experience, as he always has, but he witnesses now from inside his own life. It is a great life, and one we all want to go on sharing via new volumes for a long, long time.

A CANDLE FOR THE DARK. By **Orva Lee Ice.** 128 pages. Abingdon, $2.00. I approach from upwind any book of sermons that announces itself as "informal and homespun." No one knows better than I the propriety of a certain amount of corn in Christian preaching, but there is a limit. The trouble with most homespun preachers is that they don't know where that limit is. When an author, besides being homespun, has a name like Orva Lee Ice, which sounds suspiciously like a wispy, fragrant lady poet, the approach to the book is even more cautious. Having said all of which, let me throw caution to the winds and say that I reveled in every page of *A Candle for the Dark.* This preaching builds more on advice and counsel than on theological penetration, but it is good advice and wholesome counsel. What the publishers have called "homespun" is far more than that. It is illustration from the common life as observed by a remarkably keen eye and a robust good humor. Dr. Ice obviously responds with delight to the tangy and to the juicy in everyday experience, and because his tongue is as attuned to the telling as his ear is to the hearing, he communicates that delight. His topics are the themes of a man who doesn't let anything get by him: "Have You Left Anything?" "Won't Power," "Practicing Without Preaching," etc. Congregations must have eaten it up. Only another preacher, though, could appreciate how well it is done.

HOW TO START COUNSELING. By **William E. Hulme.** 157 pages. Abingdon, $2.50. Here is a book that will put the end knot in the thread of a man's pastoral ministry. With Dr. Hulme's advice in mind, the minister's concern for his people can develop into counseling that holds because its beginning is set firm. Nothing is taken for granted but the minister's will to be helpful. With that much to go on, the experienced guide leads the reader step by step through the process of setting up a counseling program. The advice is detailed, practical, specific. Best of all, Dr. Hulme makes it perfectly clear that pastoral counseling is not a distinct and separate dis-

dine, which may or may not be acted by particular preachers. In eloping the role of preaching, ing and administration in total nseling, the book bears witness to fact that no preacher who aches, calls or administrates can ape the counseling implications of labors. The lesson is that we are nselors, willy-nilly. The moral is t we'd better be good ones. This k, with its bibliography, is the ce to start.

When God Came Down. By **Andrew Blackwood, Jr.** 71 pages. Baker ok House, $1.50. Last Lent Andrew Blackwood the Less gave us a oughtful and useful book of sermons that season. Now comes a comnion volume of sermons appropriate Advent and Christmas. Like the rlier ones, these are thoughtful and eful—maybe not leavened quite as ll. The theology is traditional, with phasis on the human difference it akes. The style is uncluttered, direct.

Christmas: An American Annual Christmas Literature and Art. ol. 25. Edited by **R. E. Haugan.** Augsarg, $1.25 (paper), $2.50 (cloth). ere is a generous, gracious edition the big Christmas annual which has me to be a tradition in many homes. here are articles, stories, poems, ur interesting, brand-new Christmas mns, and some really first-class, ll-color prints. Carlo Maratta's Holy Family" and Albrecht Durer's Adoration of the Magi" come off pecially well on the big, heavy pages.

Raising Money for Church Building Projects. By **Arthur W. Lumley.** 28 pages. Abingdon, $2.00. Here is an valuable handbook for the church hich is planning a major fund-raisng campaign, and wants to direct s own effort. It is specific, detailed, ractical. The author can be trusted: e is one who has practiced often and ell what he here so clearly preaches.

T.A.G.

Religion in Crisis and Custom: A Sociological and Psychological Study. By **Anton T. Boisen.** Harper, 4.00. Here is an excellent effort to explain in scientific terms those emerging new forms of Christianity, he pentecostal sects. Boisen gives a rational account, in general accord with the scientific picture of the evolution of living structures (whether biological or social), of how these seemingly irrational "fringe" ideologies, so looked down upon by both conservative religionists and agnostic intellectuals, do in fact modify the main stem of religious tradition and provide solutions to the problems of human adjustment for which the wisdom of the intellectuals seems to be inadequate. Thus his analysis supports the opinion of those who suggest that these sects may be vital sources of continuing Christian reformation.

Boisen's interpretation unites the insights gained from his personal experience of religious and mental crises with commonly accepted scientific doctrines of the role of changes in the patterns of environmental press in creating new patterns in living structures. The crises brought about when new conditions threaten the viability of existing patterns of life stimulate radical variations in the behavior of a human being. As in genic mutation, it is clear that the existence of a larger number of variant forms increases the chances of producing a structure that will be adapted to the new conditions. Within the operations of the individual human organism there is inherent a mechanism for producing and selecting variant forms yielding optimum satisfaction or viability. This may be observed in the yield of novel perceptual or conceptual forms of human experience in reaction to familiar stimuli, the "distortions" of percept and affect commonly described by psychiatrists or of concept described by creators of scientific theories. To the extent that such new creations are not validated by successful adaptation in future experience they are termed hallucinations, madness. To the extent that they are adaptive they are hailed by posterity as a creative event, a new revelation of truth.

Boisen carries this process beyond the creation and testing of new forms in the life of the individual human being to its testing in the experience of human society. The individual in whom is created a radical revision of his conception of and orientation to "that which is supreme in the system of loyalties"—God—naturally attempts to communicate it. The radical ideas of some individuals appeal to certain others who adopt them, and they form a new sect around the creative radical. This capacity of new ideas to appeal to more than one individual is another step in the selective process. The new fringe (ofttimes called wild or mad) group thus formed is a social experiment that further tests the viability of the new pattern. Boisen delineates the history of these groups, showing how the radical form gets pruned and finally incorporated as a new and useful element in the main stream of a religion or culture.

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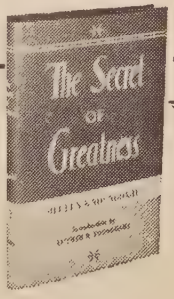

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Has Christ Made a Difference?

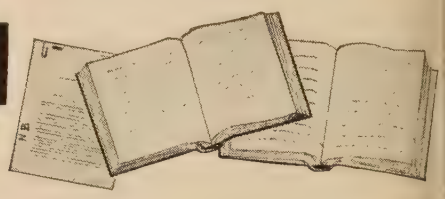
(Continued from page 25)

let him use our lives as he will—unless we can do these things we will not find the blessed heaven to our liking when the last trumpet sounds. And on the other hand, if we can live in God's Kingdom now, we won't have any worry when that great Day comes.

When we leave church this morning, we can pretend that we are in heaven. We will think the thoughts of the redeemed. When we see a person who needs our help we will remember th we have all eternity to help him. Wh we are forced to stand alone we w remember that Jesus Christ himse is our companion and nothing el matters. We can live the life of t Kingdom. It won't be sacrifice. It wo be a burden. It won't be a duty. will be glory—glory now and forev

That is the difference that Chri has made!

Nota Bene



WE conscript our entire citizenry for war, and we decorate men for their services in the hours of physical danger which war always brings, but we do not expect and demand and recognize equal service for *peace*. What do you think would happen if we were to conscript men and women in the interest of making peace, and send them out as creative armies to help people find a new way of life, to help the needy nations of the world build roads and systems of communication, plant their fields, to teach new methods of agriculture and of sanitation, create water systems and sewage systems, build school buildings, and give instruction in reading following the pattern of Frank Laubach?—*Frederick M. Meek*, The Life to Live *(New York: Oxford University Press, 1955).**

YOU know the story of how Noel Coward once sent a picture post card of Venus de Milo to a little girl, and wrote across the bottom: "This is what will happen to you, if you don't stop biting your fingernails." Well, the same sort of thing happens to us when we try to live entirely on our own resources.—*David E. Roberts*, The Grandeur and Misery of Man *(New York: Oxford University Press, 1955).**

LIGHT is a disinfectant but not a bulldozer, it is able to cleanse but it does not cause the walls to fall.—*John Biegeleisen*, Glimpses of Truth *(St. Louis: Eden, 1955).**

MARK TWAIN tells in one of his books of how the Mississippi River cut through a narrow neck of land one night, so that a Negro who went to sleep in Missouri woke up to find that the land he lived on was now east of the river; and since that made it part of Illinois, it made him a free man. The same sort of thing happens to anyone who penitently asks God for strength and forgiveness. He awakens to the same familiar earth, the same people, the same self. And yet everything is wonderfully different, because he stands up as a free man.—*David E. Roberts*, The Grandeur and Misery of Man *(New York: Oxford University Press, 1955).**

"YOU know those enormous lollipops . . . that children lick at all day long? Well, that's what her fear was — an all-day sucker; and she wanted to make the most of it, to go on sucking and sucking to the deliciously bitter end."—*Aldous Huxley*, The Genius and the Goddess *(New York: Harper, 1955).**

OUR calamity lies in the fact that the Communists are beating us at the very thing in which we specialize. The church has always specialized in consecration, yet the Communists are outconsecrating us.—*Charles B. Templeton*, Life Looks Up *(New York: Harper, 1955).**

That Holy Thing

THEY all were looking for a king
To slay their foes and lift them high;
Thou cam'st, a little baby thing
That made a woman cry.

O Son of Man, to right my lot
Naught but thy presence can avail;
Yet on the road thy wheels are not,
Nor on the sea thy sail!

My how or why thou wilt not heed,
But come down thine own secret stair,
That thou mayst answer all my need—
Yea, every bygone prayer.

GEORGE MACDONALD.

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The Editor's Page

The Event of the Month

WARNED by an able and timely editorial in the *Christian Century* that it was "sailing into rough waters," and informed that Dean Glenn L. Archer, executive director of POAU, would present an avalanche of evidence showing actual violations of church-state separation throughout the country, the senate subcommittee cancelled with embarrassed abruptness its elaborate project for a public inquiry into the meaning of the religion clause of the First Amendment. Thus was lost an ideal opportunity to focus unprecedented national attention upon this subject. The reasons for the cancellation are not obscure. (1) The committee received 2500 replies to a questionnaire sent out to 10,000 persons and organizations. These replies belatedly awakened the senators to the fact that their hearing and the necessity of formulating their conclusion would have serious political repercussions in their several constituencies. (2) The hand of the Catholic authorities was plainly evident in launching the inquiry and in the formulation of the questionnaire. But when the returns came in, they withdrew their support from the project, preferring to let sleeping dogs lie. They were joined by some Protestants who shrank from the public controversy that would ensue. After the cancellation, Mr. Archer released to the press his prepared testimony, which the *New York Times* printed in a two-column digest. I understand that the returns on the questionnaire will be generalized in a report now being prepared. This will save the cancelled project from utter futility.

Senators Drop a Hot Potato

The Book of the Month

THE PROTESTANT TRADITION. *By J. S. Whale. Cambridge, $3.95.*

THE Religious Book Club was wise in importing this book from England. Dr. Whale sees the Protestant tradition as the embodiment of the thought of the two master minds of the Reformation—Luther and Calvin. Their genius it was to hold together the great paradoxes of the Christian faith, without sacrificing either term of a paradox to the claim of the other. This, I take it, is what we today call dialectical theology, which is associated chiefly with the name of Karl Barth. The great paradoxes of Christianity are: law and gospel; good works and faith alone; assurance of divine acceptance though still a sinner; moral responsibility and God's free gift of salvation—all this in Luther. In Calvin—the paradox of election and reprobation. Luther's protean mind was not systematic as was that of Calvin. Frequently in controversy it betrayed him into exaggerated statements, for example, about sin as "man's very essence," or about the Fall as not merely "to the ground floor, but into the cellar." Such statements, says Whale, were prompted by his "sheer irrational wonder" at the gospel of divine grace which can bring the sinner out of darkness into marvelous light. Whale's treatment of Roman Catholicism is frank, forthright and illuminating. On church and state Luther's position was an improvisation, while Calvin's grew out of his systematic theology. I think Whale's own treatment of this subject is blurred by his failure to recognize that the church is not *in* the state, but both are in society.

A Thought for the Month

IS it not high time for Protestantism to become aware of the huge ecclesiastical bureaucracy which the denominational system compels it to support? Of the 52 denominations containing 92 per cent of America's Protestant membership, each is full-panoplied with a complete ecclesiastical structure. Each exercises in schismatic independence all the organs and functions which belong to the One church. Each is organized into presbyteries, synods and national councils (their differing nomenclature is irrelevant) with a full complement of ecclesiastical officials who administer the work of these denominations through departments and agencies fully staffed with specialists and experts. This ecclesiastical bureaucracy must be at least ten times as large as would be required by a United Church. Topping this elaborate structure, we now have nearly one thousand city and state federations of these denominations, culminating in a federation of the same denominations in the National Council of Churches. These federations have their own departments, duplicating those of the denominations themselves. Their personnel is so numerous that they jostle one another in their goings and comings. Their activities describe a criss-cross pattern of doing more and more about less and less. The quasi-secular character of these businesslike "jobs" lures ministers too easily from the parish churches. The ministry is thus drained of many of its most valuable men and the ideal of the pastoral vocation is lowered by comparison. This whole system with its staggeringly top-heavy bureaucracy is a man-made structure superimposed upon the local churches. It has no justification in ecclesiological theory or in the New Testament.

Our Protestant Bureaucracy

Charles Clayton Morrison

For the Record—

COMING back from Dallas one day last spring, Allen Miller got to talking about his work in progress. The outline, as he developed it, is ingenious and fascinating. The book, *Covenant Theology: the Basis for Christian Nurture and Discipline*, is intended for the theological instruction of parents and teachers who are engaged in the task of Christian education, whether it be in church or at home. Miller works out the thesis in dramatic sequence. The Prologue describes the covenant God makes with his people. Act One recounts the rejection of God's love by his people. Act Two introduces the Deliverer. Act Three describes the restoration of the people and their resumption of covenant responsibility. An Epilogue leads the narrative with the assurance of the fulfillment of God's Kingdom.

This capital theology is given its special practical twist by applying it variously to the whole Christian life. Allen's idea is that reliving the covenant story, as developed in his dramatic synopsis, is the meaning of the Christian life. Over and over again he finds the drama pertinent to Christian practice. Christian education, for instance, is a reliving and retelling of the covenant-story in church and home every day. The Sunday morning service ought to recapitulate the covenant story in worship every week. The preaching of the Christian year should reaffirm the covenant drama in preaching annually. The pastoral and sacramental ministry ought to re-enact the covenant story, too.

As I said, I was fascinated, and asked friend Miller to let The Pulpit have an occasional chapter from the whole work as it progressed. Since then, the manuscript has evidently prospered, with the Christian Education Press and the Commission on Christian Education of the Evangelical and Reformed Church waiting for it. From the manuscript comes this month's article. It will be recognized at once as a version of the Epilogue in which the drama's triumphant end is interpreted sacramentally—or in which the sacrament is elucidated in terms of the covenant drama's denouement. The chapter stands alone here, but as a teaser for all who will want to see soon what stands before it. That Allen Miller stands behind it all, certifies it for me.

The rest of this issue explains itself. Advent, Bible Sunday, Christmas and the end of the year all call for homiletical reflection. It is hoped that some of that will be primed by some of the suggestions offered here.

T.A.G.

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A Journal of Contemporary Preaching

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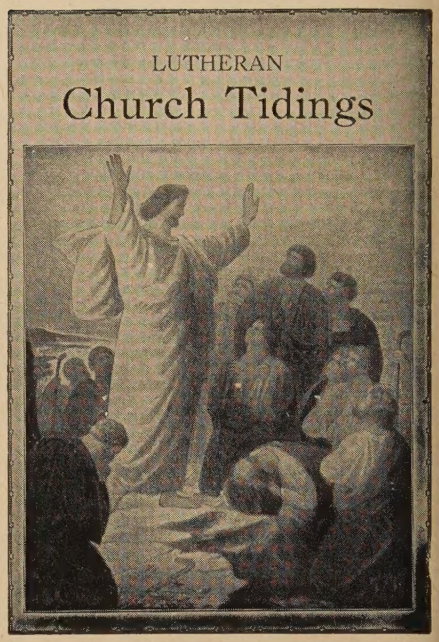

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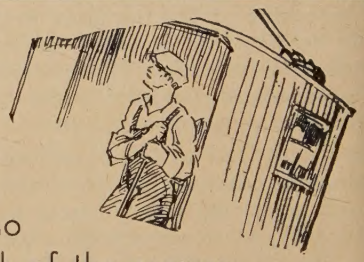

Managing your own parish paper is pleasant work that will absorb but little of your time, but will result in rich dividends.

By our helpful, standardized plan, at your service, there are no complexities. No experience is necessary. You leave the bulk of the responsibility to us.

Pastors using our service are now clearing from $10.00 to $25.00 an issue. So can you—if our plan is used. Send for samples and full particulars.

FOR SAMPLES, PRICES AND FULL PARTICULARS REGARDING OUR SERVICE AND THE HELPFUL SIXTEEN-PAGE ILLUSTRATED PARISH MANUAL CONTAINING DETAILED EXPLANATION OF PUBLISHING PROCEDURE, FILL OUT AND MAIL THE COUPON.

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